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THE SILVER SERIES OF  
ENGLISH CLASSICS

POPE'S  
ESSAY ON MAN AND  
ESSAY ON CRITICISM

EDITED BY  
GEORGE C. SEABURY

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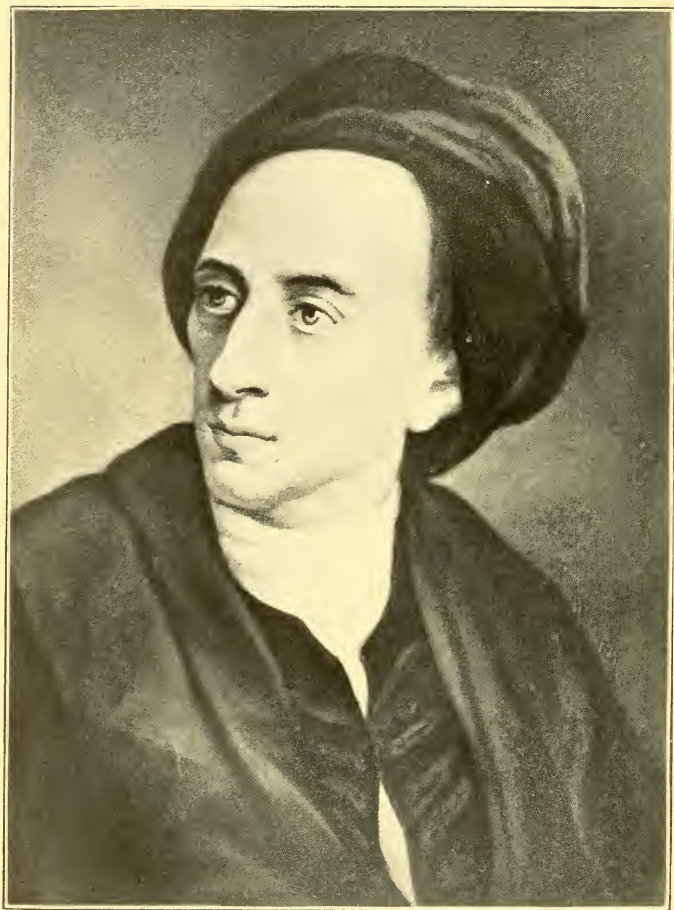
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ALEXANDER POPE.

The Silver Series of English Classics

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POPE'S  
ESSAY ON MAN  
AND  
ESSAY ON CRITICISM

*EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

BY

JOSEPH B. SEABURY



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

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## PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE SILVER SERIES OF ENGLISH CLASSICS is designed to furnish editions of many of the standard classics in English and American literature, in the best possible form for reading and study. While planned to meet the requirements for entrance examinations to college, as formulated by the Commission of American Colleges, it serves a no less important purpose in providing valuable and attractive reading for the use of the higher grades of public and private schools.

It is now generally recognized that to familiarize students with the masterpieces of literature is the best means of developing true literary taste, and of establishing a love of good reading which will be a permanent delight. The habit of cultured original expression is also established through the influence of such study.

To these ends, carefully edited and annotated editions of the Classics, which shall direct pupils in making intelligent and appreciative study of each work as a whole, and, specifically, of its individual features, are essential in the classroom.

The SILVER SERIES notably meets this need, through the editing of its volumes by scholars of high literary ability and educational experience. It unfolds the treasures of literary art, and shows the power and beauty of our language in the various forms of English composition, — as the oration, the essay, the argument, the biography, the poem, etc.

Thus, the first volume contains Webster's oration at the laying of the corner stone of Bunker Hill monument ; and, after a brief sketch of the orator's life, the *oration* is defined, — the speech itself furnishing a practical example of what a masterpiece in oratory should be.

Next follows the *essay*, as exemplified by Macaulay's " Essay on Milton." The story of the life of the great essayist creates an interest in his work, and the student, before he proceeds to study the essay, is shown in the Introduction the difference between the oratorical and the essayistic style.

After this, Burke's "Speech on Conciliation" is treated in a similar manner, the essential principles of *forensic* authorship being set forth.

Again, De Quincey's "Flight of a Tartar Tribe" — a conspicuous example of pure *narration* — exhibits the character and quality of this department of literary composition.

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The beginner, as well as the somewhat advanced scholar, will find in this series ample instruction and guidance for his own study, without being perplexed by abstruse or doubtful problems.

With the same thoughtfulness for the student's progress, the appended Notes provide considerable information outright; but they are also designed to stimulate the student in making researches for himself, as well as in applying, under the direction of the teacher, the principles laid down in the critical examination of the separate divisions.

A portrait, either of the author or of the personage about whom he writes, will form an attractive feature of each volume. The text is from approved editions, keeping as far as possible the original form; and the contents offer, at a very reasonable price, the latest results of critical instruction in the art of literary expression.

The teacher will appreciate the fact that enough, and not too much, assistance is rendered the student, leaving the instructor ample room for applying and extending the principles and suggestions which have been presented.

## INTRODUCTION.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL.

A LITTLE man with a large brain, a frail man with a sinewy brain, a misshapen man with a well-proportioned brain, Alexander Pope for fifty-six years lived a life out of poise with itself. From beginning to end it was body *versus* mind. From the day of his birth, which occurred in London May 21, 1688, Pope struggled with relentless physical foes, making his earthly career "a long disease." It is a phenomenon in the annals of literature that a man under such an exhausting inheritance of ill-health should have achieved so great fame.

Like many other persons of intellectual acuteness in deformed bodies, Pope had a singularly expressive countenance and a luminous eye. Nature had endowed him with a melodious voice, which gave rise to the title he bore, "The Little Nightingale."

In early life he showed remarkable gentleness of disposition. In a vein of pathetic candor Dr. Samuel Johnson said of him: "The weakness of his body continued through life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood." It is true that jealousy and rancor, that childish spite and caustic revenge, are far too apparent in his poems and correspondence, but the qualities of philanthropy and filial devotion are not wanting in the relationships of his life. "There is nothing easier," says Beuve, "than to make a caricature of Pope." The man

who encased himself in a stiff canvas jacket to support his distorted body, who wore three pairs of stockings, drawn on one over the other to cover his slender legs, who sat in a high chair at table, the man who was dependent on the care of women, who was "crafty and malignant," puerile and peevish, this man was always the jest of cynic and of censor. His literary vanity was conspicuous. Although a genuine admirer of the great masters of the art of expression, he had an overpowering estimate of his own genius.

Pope's parents were of "gentle blood." His father was a linen-draper. He accumulated a fortune and retired from business. The mother of Pope was Edith Turner, who like her husband was a Roman Catholic and brought up her son in that faith. But the poet never developed very positive religious opinions. The father died when the son was twenty-nine years of age, and the mother when he was forty-five. Pope's respect for his mother was justly due to her strong character. He cherished her love, and sought her pleasure. On a monument erected to her memory the son recorded his veneration for "one of the best of mothers and most loving of women." In contemplating Pope's devotion to his mother, Dr. Johnson wrote: "Life has among its soothing and quiet comforts few things better to give than such a son."

Pope's precocity is proverbial. At the age of eight he began Latin and Greek under a Romish priest and friend of the family, Taverner. He read Ogilby's *Homer* and Sandys' *Ovid*. He made metrical translations of these classical authors. At twelve he wrote a play founded on the *Iliad*. English poetry early filled him with enthusiasm. Chaucer and Spenser were his absorbing delight. But no English writer held the high place in his estimation that Dryden held. He discovered "the

art and mystery " of his style. He made him his model. One of the earliest productions of his pen is the *Ode to Solitude*, written at Binfield, whither his father had moved with his family in 1700 to escape the feverish ecclesiastical unrest of the times. Pope lived at Binfield from the time he was twelve till he was twenty-eight. It was the period of *literary expansion*.

The first poems to establish the reputation of our author were the *Pastorals*, published in 1709. This work was written when the poet was sixteen years of age, but not given to the public until he was twenty-one. Following this (1711) was the *Essay on Criticism*. The publication of this incisive poem by one so young gave Pope the position of the foremost poet of his age. The mock-heroic poem, *The Rape of the Lock*, belongs to his twenty-fourth year, an ideal creation of pure fancy, founded on the fact mentioned to him by a friend that Lord Petre, a fashionable courtier at the court of Queen Anne, plucked a lock of hair from the head of a beautiful young maid of honor, Arabella Fermor. This incident Pope treats with most bewitching pleasantry, showing how hard it is to find the element of the heroic in polite society. Lowell says this poem is sufficient to immortalize its author, and adds, "in it the natural genius of Pope found fuller and freer expression than in any other of his poems."

Although Pope was in no sense a poet of nature, his *Windsor Forest* (the name of the region in which he lived) shows him not unappreciative of nature's voice. The poem abounds in the choicest specimens of versification and is an example of the purest diction. Among the poems written at Binfield were the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* and the *Temple of Fame*. Here he began a very laborious literary effort—covering twelve years—his translation of the *Iliad*. The first book appeared in 1715, the entire translation was completed in 1720. It placed in the hands

of the poet £5000 ; the publication of the *Odyssey* £3000 additional,—a literary competency.

In 1716 Pope moved to Chiswick. The two years spent there are chiefly eventful because of the death of his father and the publication of the *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard*.

In the year 1718 Pope moved with his mother to Twickenham, picturesquely situated on the banks of the Thames. Here, in a beautiful villa, he passed the remainder of his life, in ease but not in affluence. He devoted much time to horticulture and made a subterranean grotto, which he furnished with looking-glasses. He gathered about him the literary lights of the day—Swift, Addison, Prior, Gay, Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot. Statesmen, men of art and science, were frequently his guests. The patronage of the great and famous served to feed that passionate fondness for being in the public eye which was natural to Pope. His brilliant successes gave a tone of boastfulness and loftiness to the poet, and led him to look with unbecoming disdain upon the writers of lesser name : “the beggarly scribblers in the pay of publishers.” Pope brought upon himself the bitter envy and revenge of his cotemporaries. As an answer to his calumniators he wrote what is considered the most scathing piece of satire ever published, *The Dunciad*. “In it he flays, and boils, and roasts, and dismembers the miserable scribblers he attacks.” In this satirical invective Pope’s judgment forsook him, permitting the coarser elements of his nature to rule the finer. He descends to the most ribald personalities. Names otherwise lost to fame are rescued from their obscurity by Pope’s fierce satire.

The poet’s literary friendships were of a somewhat precarious sort. If, as Taine says, “he wished to be admired, and nothing more,” when admiration ceased friendship was severed. To his jealousy as a writer may

be traced his unhappy squabbles with Addison, Swift, and Lord Hervey. His treatment of Bolingbroke was singularly ungrateful, but it did not estrange that ardent admirer. When Pope was thirty-seven, by a painful accident he lost the use of two fingers. Voltaire, being in England at the time, wrote him an appreciative letter of sympathy.

Among the poems of Pope's later life the supreme place must be given to the *Essay on Man*, the study of which has engaged the attention of thinking men from his day to ours. The *Epistle on Taste*, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, the *Correspondence*, the *Imitations of Horace*, belong to the later period of his industrious life.

Pope took no active interest in politics. He treated the subject flippantly. In his own words: "In my politics, I think no further than how to prefer the peace of my life in any government under which I live, nor in my religion than to preserve the peace of my conscience in any church with which I communicate."

Pope died at Twickenham, May 30, 1744, and was buried in the churchyard of that place. He was laid to rest near the mother whom he so heartily venerated, and whose death antedated his own by a decade.

## CRITICAL.

"The foremost of our classical poets." "The great moral poet of all time." "The poet of a thousand years." "Himself a literature." Such are some of the encomiums which the ardent admirers of Alexander Pope have heaped upon him. That he was the foremost poet of his day no one seriously doubts; that he had poetic defects every one admits. And yet no poet was ever so highly lauded, so petted, so coddled by a devoted public as he. The publication of *The Rape of the Lock* brought about him



a whirlwind of enthusiasm. His *Pastorals*, his *Temple of Fame*, his *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard*, as they came from the press from time to time, served to solidify the fibre of his reputation.

No great poet was ever held up as a target for the arrows of envy and hatred as was Pope. Whatever may have been the calibre of his poetic genius, his personality was irritative. His dwarfish stature, his splenetic ill-will, his proverbial parsimony, his abnormal conceit, his querulous suspicion, kept him in perpetual contempt before the public. In Taine's racy words: "He had all the appetite and whims of an old child, an old invalid, an old author, an old bachelor."

Pope's literary genius has surmounted all obstacles and his reputation has defied all enemies. The cautious, the wise, the discreet judgment of his day and ours places him among the great writers of English literature. But admiration should be impartial. Johnson admired him with discrimination and Warton with self-restraint. So do men of our time. Lowell says: "It will hardly be questioned that the man who writes what is still piquant and rememberable, a century and a quarter after his death, was a man of genius." Again he says: "His more ambitious work may be defined as careless thinking carefully versified."

It is the wholesome judgment of our day that every writer must be studied amid his surroundings. His age interprets him quite as much as he interprets his age. It is true of Pope. Making all due allowance for the physical and mental limitations with which he was born, and under which he struggled, his environment was defective. It was the age of duplicity at court, the age of widespread policy, intrigue and cunning. The statesmen of the day made no scruple of slandering and maligning their enemies, of climbing up the ladder of



fame by pulling other men down. Social morals were at a low ebb. Literature felt the general decadence of a manful standard of life. A man of Pope's fragile nature felt the atmosphere in which he lived : he reflected its spirit. His conspicuous satirical gift found a wide field in the form of poetry which especially delighted him. The biting, withering repartee which fills the pages of *The Dunciad* is of the nature of revenge more than of satire. And yet his revenge was not of the morose, malicious order. It was the pastime of his genius, the practice of his imagination, to set forth in stinging personalities the defects of men, particularly those who had offended him by their attacks upon his poetry. "Airy and graceful in his malice," he may have been, but it must be regarded as a serious defect in his writings that his abnormally sensitive and vindictive nature found so fertile a field of expression in the works that have made him famous.

It remains for us to consider what seem to the writer the salient qualities of Pope's style.

(1) *Accuracy*. Pope himself says Mr. Walsh told him there was one way left of excelling. "We had several great poets, but we never had one great poet that was correct, and he advised me to make that my study and aim." Pope followed this advice. He made precision his ideal. He sought to eliminate inaccuracies and remove redundancies. He aimed at exactness in the thought to be expressed and in the form that thought should take. The charm of his illuminating metaphors lies in their perfect adaptation to the idea to be illustrated. Before anything from his pen appeared in print he spent eight or nine years in painstaking investigation, reading, studying : "poetry his only business," and "idleness his only pleasure." In a letter to Walsh he writes, "It seems not so much the perfection of sense to say things that have never been said before, as to express those best

that have been said oftenest." Pope's observation of men and manners was technical and searching. His scrutiny of personal foibles was analytic, and yet his analysis was not always logical. The reader of Pope cannot fail to be struck with the author's consummate art in making every thought stand out a complete whole.

(2) *Finish*. This industrious author kept every poem two years before it was published. He subjected it to a minute process of examination. He recast it, re-phrased it, polished it, burnished it. He pursued this refining art until every sentence, line, word, syllable was correctly framed, nicely adjusted, effectively inserted. The balance of the metre was faultless; stately epigrams abound on every page.

(3) *Condensation*. It is acknowledged by Pope's severest critics that he was a master of concise statement. In his own words: "Nothing is more certain than that much of the force, as well as the grace of arguments or instructions, depends on their conciseness." He was mathematical in reducing every expression to its lowest terms, finding the prime factors in every literary problem. As a result of this passion for condensation, it is impossible to find a line, a word too many. Pope is the English Tacitus. In terseness of phraseology he stands without a peer. He once remarked that one of the great conditions of writing well is "to know thoroughly what one writes about." After gaining a lucid conception of the thought to be expressed, he had it in his power to condense it and compress it into the form where it would convey the most perfect image to the mind in the least possible number of words.

(4) *Rhythm*. The liquid beauty of Pope's lines impresses every reader. There is no hiatus; every period is exquisitely rounded. It was Dr. Johnson who said, "A thousand years may elapse before there shall appear

another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." In poetic symmetry he was peerless. "I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." Always studious, always taking down data from conversation or reading, he was on the alert at all times to increase the fund of his poetic material. This he wove into his poems with a grace of metrical movement that surprises and charms the reader.

Ruskin considers Pope one of the two "masters of the absolute art of language." The other is Vergil. Pope is more incisive, more comprehensive than Vergil. He has a wit that is cutting, at times corrosive. Lacking in the force and majesty that make the pages of Dryden so commanding to the attention and admiration of all, Pope abounds in grace of form and reach of execution. He covers in his more serious poems "every law of art, of criticism, of economy, of policy, and finally of benevolence." Who has realized more nearly than he the familiar lines of Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire :

" Of all those arts in which the wise excel,  
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well " !

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*The text used in this edition is that of Warburton, the friend to whom Pope entrusted, a few years before his death, the congenial task of arranging and editing his poetical works. This authentic edition has become the popular one, and it has been adopted, with some minor changes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalizing, for the present volume of English Classics.*

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

1688. (May 21) Birth of Pope in London.
1700. Pope takes up his residence with his father at Binfield.
1704. Intimacy with Sir William Trumball begins.
1705. Forms intimate acquaintance with Walsh.
1709. *Pastorals* published.
1711. *Essay on Criticism*. Introduced to Gay.
1712. Introduced to Addison. *Rape of the Lock*. *The Messiah*.
1713. (April) Addison's *Cato* first acted. *Prologue to Cato*.  
*Windsor Forest*. *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*.  
Subscription for *Translation of Iliad* opened.
1714. Death of Queen Anne. *Rape of the Lock* enlarged.  
*Temple of Fame*.
1715. *Iliad* (Vol. I).
1716. (April) Moves to Chiswick.
1717. *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*. *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard*. (October) Death of Pope's father.
1718. Pope settles with his mother at Twickenham.
1720. *Iliad* (last volume).
1723. First return of Bolingbroke.
1725. Edition of *Shakespeare*. Pope attacked by Theobald.  
*Odyssey*, Vols. I-III. Second return of Bolingbroke.
1726. *Letters to Cromwell*. Swift at Twickenham.
1727. (June) Death of George I. *Miscellanies*, Vols. I and II,  
containing *Treatise on the Bathos*.
1728. *The Dunciad*, Books I-III.
1730. *Grub-street Journal*. Continued till 1737.
1731. *Epistle on Taste*. The remaining *Moral Essays* up to 1735.
1732. *Essay on Man*, Ep. I. The remaining *Epistles* up to 1734.
1733. (June) Death of Pope's mother.
1735. *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. Death of Arbuthnot. *Pope's Correspondence*.
1736. *Correspondence* (authorized edition).
1737. *Imitations of Horace*.
1738. *Epilogue to Satires*.
1740. First meeting with Warburton.
1742. *The New Dunciad* (in four books).
1743. *The Dunciad* (with Cibber as hero).
1744. (May 30) Death of Pope at Twickenham.

## PREFACE TO THE "ESSAY ON MAN."

THE fame of Alexander Pope rests chiefly upon his didactic poem, *Essay on Man*. It is read more widely than any other work of its kind in the English language. It is the common ground on which men of opposite views in literature, religion, and social ethics meet in sympathetic accord. It is philosophical without being abstruse, analytic without being dry, comprehensive without being wearisome.

The poem is the consummation of Pope's purpose to write a series of *Moral Essays*,—"Some pieces on human Life and Manners," as the poet himself calls them. In this list belong "The Use of Riches," "On the Knowledge and Character of Men," and "Of the Character of Women."

The *Essay on Man* is, in the realm of poetry, what Butler's *Analogy* is in the realm of argumentative prose. It aimed to put religion upon a rational basis and to popularize ethical discussions. The plan of the *Essay* was suggested by the poet's friend, Lord Bolingbroke, who furnished most of the arguments and to whom Pope dedicates the poem. It contains the essence of the thought of the times on the subjects discussed. The poem is strong in the logical basis of its structure: but in its internal development it lacks in logical coherence. Lowell calls this poem "a droll medley of inconsistent opinions." The wholesome, pungent truths taught in this poem far outweigh any minor variations from the accepted tenets of ethics. In the words of the author: "If I could flatter

myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate yet not inconsistent, and a short yet not imperfect, system of ethics."

At first glance it seems to the reader surprising that the poet should have written upon so occult a subject in poetry rather than prose. Let Pope himself explain :

"I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious ; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards ; the other may seem odd, but it is true. I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain, than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness."

The power of this masterly moral epic lay in its brilliant versification, its terse epigrams, its luminous metaphors, its striking antitheses, its noble climaxes. Through every book the poem breathes a rational optimism, which quite eclipses any appearance of pantheism, fatalism, or pessimism. There is a great moral momentum to the poem, which frequently rises to supreme heights of rhythmic beauty.

The poem is an integer. It should be read continuously, thoroughly, slowly, and read to the end. Weigh each word : each word has force. Every adjective is a picture ; every noun a strong tower ; every verb a thing of life.

# AN ESSAY ON MAN.

## ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE I.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO THE  
UNIVERSE.

Of man in the abstract. — I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, ver. 17, etc. — II. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, ver. 35, etc. — III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, ver. 77, etc. — IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of His dispensations, ver. 109, etc. — V. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world, which is not in the natural, ver. 131, etc. — VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though, to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, ver. 173, etc. — VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason: that reason alone counter-  
bails all the other faculties, ver. 207. — VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, ver. 233. — IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, ver. 250. — X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, ver. 281, etc., to the end.



## EPISTLE I.

AWAKE, my St. John ! leave all meaner things  
 To low ambition, and the pride of kings.  
 Let us, (since life can little more supply  
 Than just to look about us and to die),  
 Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man ; 5  
 A mighty maze ! but not without a plan ;  
 A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot ;  
 Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.  
 Together let us beat this ample field,  
 Try what the open, what the covert yield ; 10  
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore  
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar ;  
 Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
 And catch the manners living as they rise ;  
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can ; 15  
 But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I. Say first, of God above or Man below,  
 What can we reason but from what we know ?  
 Of Man, what see we but his station here,  
 From which to reason, or to which refer ? 20  
 Through worlds unnumbered though the God be known,  
 'T is ours to trace Him only in our own.  
 He, who through vast immensity can pierce,  
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,  
 Observe how system into system runs, 25  
 What other planets circle other suns,  
 What varied being peoples ev'ry star,  
 May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.  
 But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,  
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30  
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul  
 Looked through, or can a part contain the whole ?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,  
 And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee ?



II. Presumptuous man ! the reason wouldst thou find, 35  
 Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind ?  
 First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,  
 Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less ?  
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made  
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade ? 40  
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above,  
 Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove ?

Of systems possible, if 't is confest  
 That Wisdom Infinite must form the best,  
 Where all must full or not coherent be, 45  
 And all that rises, rise in due degree ;  
 Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 't is plain,  
 There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man :  
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)  
 Is only this, if God has placed him wrong ? 50

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,  
 May, must be right, as relative to all.  
 In human works, though labored on with pain,  
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain ;  
 In God's, one single can its end produce ; 55  
 Yet serves to second too some other use.  
 So man, who here seems principal alone,  
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,  
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal ;  
 'T is but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains  
 His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains :  
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,  
 Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god :  
 Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend 65  
 His actions', passions', being's use and end ;  
 Why doing, suff'ring, checked, impelled ; and why  
 This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault ;

Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought : 70  
 His knowledge measured to his state and place ;  
 His time a moment, and a point his space.  
 If to be perfect in a certain sphere,  
 What matter, soon or late, or here or there ?  
 The blest to-day is as completely so, 75  
 As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,  
 All but the page prescribed, their present state :  
 From brutes what men, from men what spirits know : 80  
 Or who could suffer being here below ?  
 The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,  
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?  
 Pleased to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,  
 And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.  
 Oh, blindness to the future ! kindly giv'n, 85  
 That each may fill the circle marked by Heav'n,  
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,  
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,  
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then ; with trembling pinions soar ;  
 Wait the great teacher Death ; and God adore.  
 What future bliss, He gives not thee to know,  
 But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.  
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast 95  
 Man never Is, but always To be blest  
 The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutored mind  
 Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind ; 100  
 His soul, proud science never taught to stray  
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way ;  
 Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,  
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n ;

Some safer world in depths of woods embraced, 105  
 Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,  
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.  
 To be, contents his natural desire,  
 He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire ; 110  
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou ! and, in thy scale of sense,  
 Weigh thy opinion against Providence ;  
 Call imperfection what thou fanciest such, 115  
 Say, here he gives too little, there too much :  
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,  
 Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust ;  
 If Man alone engross not Heav'n's high care ;  
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there ; 120  
 Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,  
 Re-judge His justice, be the god of God.  
 In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies ;  
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.  
 Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125  
 Men would be angels, angels would be gods.  
 Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,  
 Aspiring to be angels, men rebel :  
 And who but wishes to invert the laws  
 Of Order, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,  
 Earth for whose use ? Pride answers, " 'T is for mine :  
 For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,  
 Suckles such herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r :  
 Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135  
 The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew ;  
 For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings ;  
 For me, health gushes from a thousand springs ;  
 Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise ;

My footstool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,  
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,  
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep  
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?  
 "No" ('t is replied), "the first Almighty Cause 145  
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws ;

The exceptions few ; some change since all began ;  
 And what created perfect ?"—Why then Man ?  
 If the great end be human happiness,  
 Then nature deviates ; and can man do less ? 150

As much that end a constant course requires  
 Of show'rs and sunshine, as of man's desires ;  
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,  
 As men forever temp'rate, calm, and wise.  
 If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design, 155  
 Why then a Borgias, or a Catiline ?

Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,  
 Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms ;  
 Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind,  
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind ? 160  
 From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs ;  
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things :  
 Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit ?  
 In both to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165  
 Were there all harmony, all virtue here :  
 That never air or ocean felt the wind ;  
 That never passion discomposed the mind.  
 But all subsists by elemental strife ;  
 And passions are the elements of life. 70  
 The gen'ral order, since the whole began,  
 Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI. What would this Man ? Now upward will he soar,  
 And little less than angel, would be more ;

Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears 175  
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.  
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,  
 Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all ?  
 Nature to these, without profusion, kind,  
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assigned ; 180  
 Each seeming want compensated of course,  
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force ;  
 All in exact proportion to the state ;  
 Nothing to add and nothing to abate.  
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own : 185  
 Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone ?  
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,  
 Be pleased with nothing, if not blessed with all ?  
 The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind ; 190  
 No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,  
 But what his nature and his state can bear.  
 Why has not man a microscopic eye ?  
 For this plain reason, Man is not a fly.  
 Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n, 195  
 T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n ?  
 Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,  
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore ?  
 Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,  
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain ? 200  
 If nature thundered in his op'ning ears,  
 And stunned him with the music of the spheres,  
 How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still  
 The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill !  
 Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205  
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies ?  
 VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,  
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends :  
 Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race,

From the green myriads in the peopled grass : 210  
 What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,  
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam :  
 Of smell, the headlong lioness between,  
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green :  
 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215  
 To that which warbles through the vernal wood :  
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !  
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line :  
 In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true  
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew ? 220  
 How instinct varies in the grov'lling swine,  
 Compared, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine !  
 'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier,  
 Forever sep'rate, yet forever near !  
 Remembrance and reflection now allied ; 225  
 What thin partitions sense from thought divide ;  
 And middle natures how they long to join,  
 Yet never pass th' insuperable line !  
 Without this just gradation could they be  
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee ? 230  
 The pow'rs of all subdued by thee alone,  
 Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one ?  
 VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,  
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.  
 Above, how high, progressive life may go ! 235  
 Around, how wide ! how deep extend below !  
 Vast chain of being ! which from God began,  
 Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,  
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,  
 No glass can reach ; from infinite to thee, 240  
 From thee to nothing.—On superior pow'rs  
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours :  
 Or in the full creation leave a void,  
 Where, one step broken, the great scale 's destroyed :

From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245  
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll  
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,  
The least confusion but in one, not all  
That system only, but the whole must fall. 250  
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,  
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky ;  
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,  
Being on being wrecked, and world on world ;  
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255  
And nature tremble to the throne of God.  
All this dread ORDER break—for whom ? for thee ?  
Vile worm ! Oh, madness ! pride ! impiety !

IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,  
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head ? 260  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind ?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another, in this gen'ral frame ;  
Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains 265  
The great directing mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole, ✓  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;  
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same ;  
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame ; 270  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided ; operates unspent ;  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;  
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :  
To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;

He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

X. Cease then, nor ORDER imperfection name :

Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

Know thy own point : this kind, this due degree

Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.

Submit.—In this, or any other sphere, 285

Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :

Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,

Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;

All chance, direction, which thou canst not see ; 290

All discord, harmony not understood ;

All partial evil, universal good ;

And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,

One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.



## ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE II.

ON THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO HIMSELF  
AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

- I. The business of man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature ; his powers and frailties, ver. 1-19. The limits of his capacity, ver. 19, etc.—II. The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary, ver. 53, etc, Self-love the stronger, and why, ver. 67, etc. Their end the same, ver. 81, etc.—III. The passions, and their use, ver. 93-130. The predominant passion, and its force, ver. 132-160. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes, ver. 165, etc. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, ver. 177.—IV. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature ; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident : What is the office of reason, ver. 202-216.—V. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, ver. 217.—VI. That, however, the ends of Providence and general good are answered in our passions and imperfections, ver. 238, etc. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men, ver. 241. How useful they are to society, ver. 251. And to individuals, ver. 263. In every state, and every age of life, ver. 273, etc.

## EPISTLE II.

I. Know then thyself, presume not God to scan ;  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise, and rudely great :  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,  
He hangs between ; in doubt to act, or rest ;  
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast ;

5

In doubt his mind or body to prefer :  
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err : 10  
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much :  
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confused ;  
 Still by himself abused, or disabused ;  
 Created half to rise and half to fall : 15  
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;  
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled :  
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world !

Go, wondrous creature ! mount where science guides,  
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides ; 20  
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,  
 Correct old Time, and regulate the sun ;  
 Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,  
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair ;  
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25  
 And quitting sense call imitating God ;  
 As eastern priests in giddy circles run,  
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.  
 Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule —  
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool ! 30

Superior beings, when of late they saw  
 A mortal man unfold all nature's law,  
 Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,  
 And showed a Newton as we show an ape.

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind, 35  
 Describe or fix one movement of his mind ?  
 Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,  
 Explain his own beginning, or his end ?  
 Alas, what wonder ! man's superior part  
 Unchecked may rise, and climb from art to art ; 40  
 But when his own great work is but begun,  
 What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

Trace science then, with modesty thy guide ;

First strip off all her equipage of pride ;  
 Deduct what is but vanity, or dress, 45  
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;  
 Or tricks to show the stretch of human brain,  
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain ;  
 Expunge the whole, or lop the excrescent parts  
 Of all our vices have created arts ; 50  
 Then see how little the remaining sum,  
 Which served the past, and must the times to come !

II. Two principles in human nature reign ;  
 Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain ;  
 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call, 55  
 Each works its end, to move or govern all :  
 And to their proper operation still,  
 Ascribe all good ; to their improper, ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul ;  
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60  
 Man, but for that, no action could attend,  
 And but for this, were active to no end :  
 { Fixed like a plant on his peculiar spot, ✓  
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot ;  
 Or, meteor-like, flame lawless through the void, 65  
 Destroying others, by himself destroyed.

Most strength the moving principle requires ;  
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.  
 Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,  
 Formed but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70  
 Self-love still stronger, as its objects nigh ;  
 Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie :  
 That sees immediate good by present sense ;  
 Reason, the future and the consequence.  
 Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 75  
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.  
 The action of the stronger to suspend,  
 Reason still use, to reason still attend.

Attention, habit and experience gains ;  
Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80

Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,  
More studious to divide than to unite ;  
And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,  
With all the rash dexterity of wit.

Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85  
Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.

Self-love and reason to one end aspire,  
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire ;  
But greedy that, its object would devour,  
This taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r : 90  
Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,  
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

III. Modes of self-love the passions we may call ;  
'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all ;  
But since not ev'ry good we can divide, 95  
And reason bids us for our own provide ;  
Passions, though selfish, if their means be fair,  
List under reason, and deserve her care ;  
Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,  
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 100

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast  
Their virtue fixed ; 't is fixed as in a frost ;  
Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;  
But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :  
The rising tempest puts in act the soul, 105  
Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.  
On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,  
Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;  
Nor God alone in the still calm we find,  
He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind. 110

Passions, like elements, though born to fight,  
Yet, mixed and softened, in His work unite :  
These 't is enough to temper and employ ;

But what composes man, can man destroy ?  
 Suffice that reason keep to Nature's road, 115  
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.  
 Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,  
 Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,  
 These mixed with art, and to due bounds confined,  
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind : 120  
 The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife  
 Gives all the strength and color of our life.

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes ;  
 And when in act they cease, in prospect rise :  
 Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125  
 The whole employ of body and of mind.  
 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike ;  
 On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike ;  
 Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,  
 As strong or weak the organs of the frame. 130  
 And hence one MASTER PASSION in the breast,  
 Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,  
 Receives the lurking principle of death ;  
 The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135  
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength ;  
 So, cast and mingled with his very frame,  
 The mind's disease, its ruling passion came ;  
 Each vital humor which should feed the whole,  
 Soon flows to this, in body and in soul : 140  
 Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,  
 As the mind opens and its functions spread,  
 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,  
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, habit is its nurse ; 145  
 Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse ;  
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r ;  
 As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour.

We, wretched subjects, though to lawful sway,  
 In this weak queen some fav'rite still obey : 150  
 Ah ! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,  
 What can she more than tell us we are fools ?  
 Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,  
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !  
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155  
 The choice we make, or justify it made ;  
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,  
 She but removes weak passions for the strong :  
 So, when small humors gather to a gont,  
 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160

Yes, Nature's road must ever be preferred :  
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard :  
 'T is hers to rectify, not overthrow,  
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe :  
 A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends, 165  
 And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends :  
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,  
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.  
 Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,  
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease ; 170  
 Through life 'tis followed, ev'n at life's expense ;  
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,  
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,  
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.

Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill, 175  
 Grafts on this passion our best principle :  
 'T is thus the mercury of man is fixed,  
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mixed ;  
 The dross cements what else were too refined,  
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,  
 On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear ;  
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,

Wild nature's vigor working at the root.  
 What crops of wit and honesty appear 185  
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear !  
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply ;  
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence ; sloth, philosophy ;  
 Lust, through some certain strainers well refined,  
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind ; 190  
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind 's a slave,  
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave ;  
 Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,  
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.  
 Thus nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195  
 The virtue nearest to our vice allied ;  
 Reason the bias turns to good from ill,  
 And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.  
 The fiery soul abhorred in Catiline,  
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine : 200  
 The same ambition can destroy or save,  
 And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.  
 This light and darkness in our chaos joined,  
 What shall divide ? The God within the mind :  
 Extremes in nature equal ends produce, 205  
 In man they join to some mysterious use ;  
 Though each by turns the other's bound invade,  
 As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,  
 And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice  
 Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210  
 Fools ! who from hence into the notion fall,  
 That vice or virtue there is none at all.  
 If white and black blend, soften and unite  
 A thousand ways, is there no black or white ?  
 Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain ; 215  
 'T is to mistake them, costs the time and pain.  
 Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
 As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220  
 But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed :  
 Ask where's the north ? at York, 't is on the Tweed ;  
 In Scotland, at the Orcades ; and there,  
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.  
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225  
 But thinks his neighbor further gone than he :  
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,  
 Or never feel the rage, or never own ;  
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,  
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230  
 Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,  
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree ;  
 The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise ;  
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.  
 'T is but by parts we follow good or ill ; 235  
 For, vice or virtue, self directs it still ;  
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal ;  
 But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole.  
 That counter-works each folly and caprice ;  
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice ; 240  
 That, happy frailties to all ranks applied,  
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,  
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,  
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief ;  
 That, virtue's ends from vanity can raise, 245  
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise :  
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,  
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.  
 Heav'n forming each on other to depend,  
 A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250  
 Bids each on other for assistance call,  
 Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.  
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally



The common int'rest, or endear the tie.  
 To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255  
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here ;  
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,  
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign ;  
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,  
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,  
 Not one will change his neighbor with himself.  
 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,  
 The fool is happy and he knows no more ;  
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n, 265  
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.  
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,  
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king ;  
 The starving chemist in his golden views  
 Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,  
 And pride bestowed on all, a common friend ;  
 See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,  
 Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.  
 Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law, 275

Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw :  
 Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,  
 A little louder, but as empty quite :  
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,  
 And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age : 280  
 Pleased with this bauble still, as that before ;  
 'Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays  
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;  
 Each want of happiness by hope supplied, 285  
 And each vacuity of sense by pride :  
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;  
 In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy ;

One prospect lost, another still we gain,  
And not a vanity is giv'n in vain :  
Ev'n mean self-love becomes, by force divine,  
The scale to measure others' wants by thine.  
See ! and confess, one comfort still must rise,  
'T is this, Though man's a fool, yet God is wise.

## ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE III.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO SOCIETY.

- I. The whole universe one system of Society, ver. 7, etc. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, ver. 27. The happiness of animals mutual, ver. 49.—II. Reason or instinct operates alike to the good of each individual, ver. 79. Reason or instinct operates also to society, in all animals, ver. 109.—III. How far Society carried by instinct, ver. 115. How much further by Reason, ver. 128.—IV. Of that which is called the State of Nature, ver. 144. Reason instructed by Instinct in the invention of Arts, ver. 166, and in the Forms of Society, ver. 176.—V. Origin of Political Societies, ver. 196. Origin of Monarchy, ver. 207. Patriarchal Government, ver. 212.—VI. Origin of true Religion and Government, from the same principle, of Love, ver. 231, etc. Origin of Superstition and Tyranny, from the same principle, of Fear, ver. 237, etc. The influence of Self-love operating to the social and public Good, ver. 266. Restoration of true Religion and Government on their first principle, ver. 285. Mixed Government, ver. 288. Various Forms of each, and the true end of all, ver. 300, etc.

## EPISTLE III.

HERE then we rest : “The Universal Cause  
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.”

In all the madness of superfluous health,  
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,  
Let this great truth be present night and day ; 5  
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

Look round our world ; behold the chain of love  
Combining all below and all above.  
See plastic Nature working to this end,  
The single atoms each to other tend, 10

Attract, attracted to, the next in place  
 Formed and impelled its neighbor to embrace.  
 See matter next, with various life endued,  
 Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.  
 See dying vegetables life sustain, 15  
 See life dissolving vegetate again :  
 All forms that perish other forms supply,  
 (By turns we catch the vital breath, and die,)  
 Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,  
 They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20  
 Nothing is foreign : parts relate to whole ;  
 One all-extending, all-preserving soul  
 Connects each being, greatest with the least ;  
 Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast ;  
 All served, all serving : nothing stands alone ; 25  
 The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool ! worked solely for thy good,  
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food ?  
 Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,  
 For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn : 30  
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?  
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.  
 Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?  
 Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.  
 The bounding steed you pompously bestride, 35  
 Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.  
 Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain ?  
 The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain.  
 Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?  
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer : 40  
 The hog, that ploughs not, nor obeys thy call,  
 Lives on the labors of this lord of all.

Know, Nature's children all divide her care ;  
 The fur that warms a monarch, warmed a bear.  
 While man exclaims, " See all things for my use ! " 45

“See man for mine !” replies a pampered goose :  
 And just as short of reason he must fall,  
 Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow’rful still the weak control ;  
 Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole : 50  
 Nature that tyrant checks ; he only knows,  
 And helps, another creature’s wants and woes.  
 Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,  
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove ?  
 Admires the jay the insect’s gilded wings ? 55  
 Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings ?  
 Man cares for all : to birds he gives his woods,  
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods ;  
 For some his int’rest prompts him to provide,  
 For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride : 60  
 All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy  
 Th’ extensive blessing of his luxury.  
 That very life his learned hunger craves,  
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves ;  
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast, 65  
 And, ’till he ends the being, makes it blest :  
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,  
 Than favored man by touch ethereal slain.  
 The creature had his feast of life before ;  
 Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o’er ! 70

To each unthinking being Heav’n, a friend,  
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end :  
 To man imparts it ; but with such a view  
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :  
 The hour concealed, and so remote the fear, 75  
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.  
 Great standing miracle ! that Heav’n assigned  
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with reason or with instinct blest,  
 Know, all enjoy that pow’r which suits them best : 80

To bliss alike by that direction tend,  
 And find the means proportioned to their end.  
 Say, where full instinct is th' unerring guide,  
 What Pope or council can they need beside ?  
 Reason, however able, cool at best, 85  
 Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,  
 Stays 'till we call, and then not often near ;  
 But honest Instinct comes a volunteer,  
 Sure never to o'er-shoot, but just to hit ;  
 While still too wide or short is human wit ; 90  
 Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,  
 Which heavier reason labors at in vain.  
 This too serves always, reason never long ;  
 One must go right, the other may go wrong.  
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs 95  
 One in their nature, which are two in ours ;  
 And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,  
 In this 't is God directs, in that 't is man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood  
 To shun their poison, and to choose their food ? 100  
 Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,  
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ?  
 Who made the spider parallels design,  
 Sure as Demoivre, without rule or line ?  
 Who did the stork, Columbus-like explore 105  
 Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before ?  
 Who calls the council, states the certain day,  
 Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way ?

III. God in the nature of each being founds  
 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds : 110  
 But as He framed a whole, the whole to bless,  
 On mutual wants built mutual happiness :  
 So from the first eternal ORDER ran,  
 And creature linked to creature, man to man.  
 Whate'er of life all quick'ning ether keeps, 115

Or breathes through air, or shoots beneath the deeps,  
 Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds  
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.  
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,  
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120  
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,  
 Each sex desires alike, 'till two are one.  
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace ;  
 They love themselves, a third time, in their race.  
 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend, 125  
 The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend ;  
 The young dismissed to wander earth or air,  
 There stops the instinct, and there ends the care ;  
 The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,  
 Another love succeeds, another race. 130  
 A longer care man's helpless kind demands :  
 That longer care contracts more lasting bands :  
 Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,  
 At once extend the int'rest, and the love ;  
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn ; 135  
 Each virtue in each passion takes its turn ;  
 And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,  
 That graft benevolence on charities.  
 Still as one brood, and as another rose,  
 These nat'ral love maintained, habitual those : 140  
 The last, scarce ripened into perfect man,  
 Saw helpless him from whom their life began :  
 Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,  
 That pointed back to youth, this on to age ;  
 While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combined, 145  
 Still spread the int'rest, and preserved the kind.

IV. Nor think, in Nature's state they blindly trod ;  
 The state of Nature was the reign of God :  
 Self-love and Social at her birth began,  
 Union the bond of all things, and of man. 150



Pride then was not ; nor arts, that pride to aid ;  
 Man walked with beast, joint tenant of the shade ;  
 The same his table, and the same his bed ;  
 No murder clothed him, and no murder fed.  
 In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155  
 All vocal beings hymned their equal God :  
 The shrine with gore unstained, with gold undrest,  
 Unbribed, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :  
 Heav'n's attribute was Universal Care,  
 And man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 160  
 Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !  
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;  
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,  
 Murders their species and betrays his own.  
 But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165  
 And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;  
 The fury-passions from that blood began,  
 And turned on man a fiercer savage, Man.  
 See him from nature rising slow to art !  
 To copy instinct then was reason's part ; 170  
 Thus then to man the voice of Nature spake—  
 “ Go, from the creatures thy instructions take :  
 Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield ;  
 Learn from the beasts the physick of the field ;  
 Thy arts of building from the bee receive ; 175  
 Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave ;  
 Learn of the little nautilus to sail,  
 Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.  
 Here too all forms of social union find,  
 And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind ; 180  
 Here subterranean works and cities see ;  
 There towns aerial on the waving tree.  
 Learn each small people's genius, policies,  
 The ant's republic, and the realm of bees ;  
 How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185

And anarchy without confusion know ;  
 And these forever, though a monarch reign,  
 Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.  
 Mark what unvaried laws preserve each state,  
 Laws wise as nature, and as fixed as fate. 190  
 In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,  
 Entangle justice in her net of law,  
 And right, too rigid, harden into wrong,  
 Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.  
 Yet go ! and thus o'er all the creatures sway, 195  
 Thus let the wiser make the rest obey ;  
 And, for those arts mere instinct could afford,  
 Be crowned as monarchs, or as gods adored."

V. Great Nature spoke : observant man obeyed ;  
 Cities were built, societies were made ; 200  
 Here rose one little state ; another near  
 Grew by like means, and joined, through love or fear.  
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,  
 And there the streams in purer rills descend ?  
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow, 205  
 And he returned a friend, who came a foe.  
 Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,  
 When love was liberty, and Nature law.  
 Thus states were formed ; the name of king unknown,  
 'Till common int'rest placed the sway in one. 210  
 'Twas Virtue only (or in arts or arms,  
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms),  
 The same which in a sire the sons obeyed,  
 A prince the father of a people made.

VI. 'Till then, by Nature crowned, each patriarch 215  
 sate,  
 King, priest, and parent of his growing state ;  
 On him, their second Providence, they hung,  
 Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.  
 He from the wand'ring furrow called the food,

Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220  
 Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound,  
 Or fetch th' aerial eagle to the ground.  
 'Till, drooping, sick'ning, dying, they began  
 Whom they revered as God to mourn as man ;  
 Then, looking up from sire to sire, explored 225  
 One great first Father, and that first adored.  
 Or plain tradition that this all begun,  
 Conveyed unbroken faith from sire to son ;  
 The worker from the work distinct was known,  
 And simple reason never sought but one : 230  
 Ere wit oblique had broke that steady light,  
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right ;  
 To virtue, in the paths of pleasure, trod,  
 And owned a father when he owned a God.  
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then ; 235  
 For Nature knew no right divine in men,  
 No ill could fear in God ; and understood  
 A Sov'reign Being but a sov'reign good.  
 True faith, true policy, united ran,  
 This was but love of God, and this of man. 240  
 Who first taught souls enslaved, and realms undone,  
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one ;  
 That proud exception to all Nature's laws,  
 T' invert the world, and counter work its cause ?  
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law ; 245  
 'Till Superstition taught the tyrant awe,  
 Then shared the tyranny, then lent it aid,  
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made :  
 She, 'midst the lightning's blaze, and thunder's sound,  
 When rocked the mountains, and when groaned the 250  
 ground,  
 She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,  
 To pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they :  
 She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,

Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise :  
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes ; 255  
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods ;  
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust ;  
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,  
 And, formed like tyrants, tyrants would believe. 260  
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide ;  
 And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.  
 Then sacred seemed th' ethereal vault no more ;  
 Altars grew marble then, and reeked with gore :  
 Then first the Flamen tasted living food ; 265  
 Next his grim idol smeared with human blood ;  
 With heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,  
 And played the god an engine on his foe.

So drives self-love, through just and through unjust,  
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust : 270  
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause  
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.  
 For, what one likes if others like as well,  
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel ?  
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275  
 A weaker may surprise, a stronger take ?  
 His safety must his liberty restrain :  
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.  
 Forced into virtue thus by self-defence,  
 Ev'n kings learned justice and benevolence : 280  
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursued,  
 And found the private in the public good.

'T was then, the studious head or gen'rous mind,  
 Follow'r of God or friend of human kind,  
 POET or PATRIOT, rose but to restore 285  
 The faith and moral Nature gave before ;  
 Relumed her ancient light, not kindled new ;  
 If not God's image, yet His shadow drew :

Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings,  
Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings,      290  
The less, or greater, set so justly true,  
That touching one must strike the other too ;  
Till jarring int'rests, of themselves create  
Th' according music of a well-mixed state.  
Such is the world's great harmony that springs      295  
From order, union, full consent of things :  
Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made  
To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade ;  
More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,  
And, in proportion as it blesses, blest ;      300  
Draw to one point, and to one centre bring  
Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.  
For forms of government let fools contest ;  
Whate'er is best administered is best :  
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;      305  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right ;  
In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is Charity :  
All must be false that thwart this one great end,  
And all of God, that bless mankind or mend.      310  
Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives ;  
The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.  
On their own axis as the planets run,  
Yet make at once their circle round the sun ;  
So two consistent motions act the soul ;      315  
And one regards itself, and one the whole.  
Thus God and Nature linked the gen'ral frame,  
And bade Self-love and Social be the same.

## ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE IV.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO HAPPINESS.

- I. False notions of happiness, philosophical and popular, answered from ver. 19 to 27.—II. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all, ver. 30. God intends happiness to be equal ; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, and since He governs by general, not particular laws, ver. 37. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, happiness is not made to consist in these, ver. 51. But, notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness among mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of hope and fear, ver. 70.—III. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world ; and that the good man has here the advantage, ver. 77. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of nature, or of fortune, ver. 94.—IV. The folly of expecting that God should alter His general laws in favor of particulars, ver. 121.—V. That we are not judges who are good ; but that, whoever they are, they must be happiest, ver. 133, etc.—VI. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue, ver. 165. That even these can make no man happy without virtue : instanced in riches, ver. 183. Honors, ver. 191. Nobility, ver. 203. Greatness, ver. 215. Fame, ver. 235. Superior talents, ver. 257, etc. With pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, ver. 267, etc.—VII. That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, ver. 307, etc. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the order of Providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, ver. 326, etc.

## EPISTLE IV.

O HAPPINESS ! our being's end and aim !

Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content, whate'er thy name :

That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,  
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die,  
 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5  
 O'erlooked, seen double, by the fool and wise.  
 Plant of celestial seed ! if dropt below,  
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow ?  
 Fair op'ning to some Court's propitious shine,  
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine ? 10  
 Twined with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,  
 Or reaped in iron harvests of the field ?  
 Where grows ?—where grows it not ? If vain our toil,  
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil :  
 Fixed to no spot is happiness sincere, 15  
 'Tis nowhere to be found, or ev'rywhere :  
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,  
 And fled from monarchs, St. John ! dwells with thee.

Ask of the learned the way ? The learned are blind ;  
 This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind ; 20  
 Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,  
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these ;  
 Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain ;  
 Some swelled to gods, confess e'en virtue vain ;  
 Or indolent, to each extreme they fall, 25  
 To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less  
 Than this, that happiness is happiness ?

Take Nature's path, and mad opinion's leave ;  
 All states can reach it, and all heads conceive ; 30  
 Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell ;  
 There needs but thinking right and meaning well ;  
 And mourn our various portions as we please,  
 Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, man, " the Universal Cause 35  
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws " ;  
 And makes what happiness we justly call



Subsist not in the good of one, but all.  
 There's not a blessing individuals find,  
 But some way leans and hearkens to the kind : 40  
 No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,  
 No cavern'd hermit, rests self-satisfied :  
 Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,  
 Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend :  
 Abstract what others feel, what others think, 45  
 All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink :  
 Each has his share ; and who would more obtain,  
 Shall find the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is heav'n's first law ; and this confest,  
 Some are, and must be, greater than the rest, 50  
 More rich, more wise ; but who infers from hence  
 That such are happier, shocks all common sense.  
 Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,  
 If all are equal in their happiness :  
 But mutual wants this happiness increase ; 55  
 All Nature's diff'rence keeps all Nature's peace.  
 Condition, circumstance is not the thing ;  
 Bliss is the same in subject or in king,  
 In who obtain defence, or who defend,  
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend : 60  
 Heav'n breathes through ev'ry member of the whole  
 One common blessing, as one common soul.  
 But fortune's gifts if each alike possest,  
 And each were equal, must not all contest ?  
 If then to all men happiness was meant, 65  
 God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,  
 And these be happy called, unhappy those :  
 But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,  
 While those are placed in hope, and these in fear : 70  
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,  
 But future views of better, or of worse.

O sons of earth ! attempt ye still to rise,  
 By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies ?  
 Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75  
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

Know, all the good that individuals find,  
 Or God and Nature meant to mere mankind,  
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,  
 Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80

But health consists with temperance alone ;  
 And Peace, O Virtue ! Peace is all thy own.

The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain ;  
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.  
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85

Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right ?  
 Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,  
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first ?

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,  
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains : 90  
 And grant the bad what happiness they would,  
 One they must want, which is to pass for good.

Oh, blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,  
 Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe !

Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95  
 Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

But fools the good alone unhappy call,  
 For ills or accidents that chance to all.  
 See, Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just !

See god-like Turenne prostrate on the dust ! 100  
 See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife !

Was this their virtue, or contempt of life ?  
 Say, was it virtue, more though Heav'n ne'er gave,  
 Lamented Digby ! sunk thee to the grave ?

Tell me, if virtue made the son expire, 105  
 Why, full of days and honor, lives the sire ?  
 Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,

When nature sickened, and each gale was death ?  
 Or why so long (in life if long can be)  
 Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me ? 110  
 What makes all physical or moral ill ?  
 There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.  
 God sends not ill ; if rightly understood,  
 Or partial ill is universal good,  
 Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall ; 115  
 Short, and but rare, till Man improved it all.  
 We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain  
 That righteous Abel was destroyed by Cain,  
 As that the virtuous son is ill at ease  
 When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120  
 Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause  
 Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws ?  
 Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,  
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires ?  
 On air or sea new motions be imprest, 125  
 Oh, blameless Bethel ! to relieve thy breast ?  
 When the loose mountain trembles from on high,  
 Shall gravitation cease, if you go by ?  
 Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,  
 For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall ? 130  
 But still this world (so fitted for the knave)  
 Contents us not. A better shall we have ?  
 A kingdom of the just then let it be :  
 But first consider how those just agree.  
 The good must merit God's peculiar care ; 135  
 But who, but God, can tell us who they are ?  
 One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own spirit fell ;  
 Another deems him instrument of hell ;  
 If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod,  
 This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140  
 What shocks one part will edify the rest,  
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.

The very best will variously incline,  
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.  
 Whatever is, is right.—This world, 't is true, 145  
 Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too :  
 And which more blest ? who chained his country, say,  
 Or he whose virtue sighed to lose a day ?

“ But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed.”  
 What then ? Is the reward of virtue bread ? 150  
 That, vice may merit, 't is the price of toil ;  
 The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,  
 The knave deserves it, when he tempts the main,  
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.  
 The good man may be weak, be indolent ; 155  
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.  
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er ?  
 “ No—shall the good want health, the good want pow'r ? ”  
 Add health, and pow'r, and every earthly thing, 160  
 “ Why bounded pow'r ? why private ? why no king ? ”  
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n ?  
 Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n ?  
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive  
 God gives enough, while He has more to give :  
 Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand ; 165  
 Say, at what part of nature will they stand ?

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,  
 The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,  
 Is virtue's prize. A better would you fix ?  
 Then give humility a coach and six, 170  
 Justice a conqu'ror's sword, or truth a gown,  
 Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.  
 Weak, foolish man ! will Heav'n reward us there  
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?  
 The boy and man an individual makes, 175  
 Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes ?  
 Go, like the Indian, in another life

Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife ;  
 As well as dream such trifles are assigned,  
 As toys and empires, for a god-like mind. 180  
 Rewards, that either would to virtue bring  
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing :  
 How oft by these at sixty are undone  
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one !

To whom can riches give repute, or trust, 185  
 Content, or pleasure, but the good and just ?  
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,  
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.  
 O fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,  
 The lover and the love of humankind, 190  
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,  
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

Honor and shame from no condition rise ;  
 Act well your part, there all the honor lies.  
 Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made, 195  
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade ;  
 The cobbler aproned, and the parson gowned,  
 The friar hooded, and the monarch crowned.  
 "What differ more" (you cry) "than crown and cowl ?"  
 I'll tell you, friend ; a wise man and a fool. 200  
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,  
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,  
 Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow ;  
 The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings, 205  
 That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.  
 Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,  
 In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece :  
 But by your fathers' worth if yours you rate,  
 Count me those only who were good and great. 210  
 Go ! if your ancient, but ignoble, blood  
 Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,

Go ! and pretend your family is young ;  
 Nor own, your fathers have been fools so long.  
 What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards ? 215  
 Alas ! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness ; say where greatness lies ?  
 “ Where, but among the heroes and the wise ? ”  
 Heroes are much the same, the point’s agreed,  
 From Macedonia’s madman to the Swede ; 220  
 The whole strange purpose of their lives to find,  
 Or make, an enemy of all mankind !  
 Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,  
 Yet ne’er looks forward farther than his nose.  
 No less alike the politic and wise ; 225  
 All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes :  
 Men in their loose, unguarded hours they take,  
 Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.  
 But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat ;  
 ’Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great : 230  
 Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,  
 Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.  
 Who noble ends by noble means obtains,  
 Or, failing, smiles in exile or in chains,  
 Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 235  
 Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What’s fame ? a fancied life in others’ breath,  
 A thing beyond us, ev’n before our death.  
 Just what you hear, you have, and what’s unknown  
 The same (my Lord) if Tully’s or your own. 240  
 All that we feel of it begins and ends  
 In the small circle of our foes or friends ;  
 To all beside as much an empty shade  
 An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead ;  
 Alike or when, or where, they shone or shine, 245  
 Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.  
 A wit’s a feather, and a chief a rod ;

An honest Man's the noblest work of God.  
 Fame but from death a villain's name can save,  
 As Justice tears his body from the grave ; 250  
 When what t' oblivion better were resigned,  
 Is hung on high to poison half mankind.  
 All fame is foreign, but of true desert ;  
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart :  
 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs 255  
 Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas ;  
 And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,  
 Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantage lies ?  
 Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise ? 260  
 'Tis but to know how little can be known ;  
 To see all others' faults, and feel our own ;  
 Condemned in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,  
 Without a second, or without a judge :  
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ? 265  
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand.  
 Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view  
 Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account ;  
 Make fair deductions ; see to what they mount : 270  
 How much of other each is sure to cost ;  
 How each for other oft is wholly lost ;  
 How inconsistent greater goods with these ;  
 How sometimes life is risked, and always ease :  
 Think, and, if still the things thy envy call, 275  
 Say, wouldst thou be the Man to whom they fall ?  
 To sigh for ribands if thou art so silly,  
 Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy :  
 Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?  
 Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife : 280  
 If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,  
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind :



Or ravished with the whistling of a name,  
 See Cromwell, damned to everlasting fame !  
 If all, united, thy ambition call, 285  
 From ancient story learn to scorn them all.  
 There, in the rich, the honored, famed, and great,  
 See the false scale of happiness complete !  
 In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,  
 How happy ! those to ruin, these betray. 290  
 Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,  
 From dirt and seaweed as proud Venice rose ;  
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,  
 And all that raised the hero, sunk the man :  
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 295  
 But stained with blood, or ill-exchanged for gold :  
 Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,  
 Or infamous for plundered provinces.  
 Oh, wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame  
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame ; 300  
 What greater bliss attends their close of life ?  
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,  
 The trophied arches, storied halls invade  
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.  
 Alas ! not dazzled with their noontide ray, 305  
 Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day ;  
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,  
 A tale, that blends their glory with their shame !  
 Know then this truth (enough for man to know)  
 " Virtue alone is happiness below." 310  
 The only point where human bliss stands still,  
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill ;  
 Where only merit constant pay receives,  
 Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives ;  
 The joy unequalled, if its end it gain, 315  
 And if it lose, attended with no pain :  
 Without satiety, though e'er so blessed,

And but more relished as the more distressed :  
 The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,  
 Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears : 320  
 Good, from each object, from each place acquired,  
 Forever exercised, yet never tired ;  
 Never elated, while one man 's oppressed ;  
 Never dejected, while another's blessed ;  
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325  
 Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow !  
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know :  
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,  
 The bad must miss ; the good, untaught, will find ; 330  
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,  
 But looks through Nature up to Nature's God ;  
 Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,  
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine ;  
 Sees, that no being any bliss can know, 335  
 But touches some above, and some below :  
 Learns, from this union of the rising whole,  
 The first, last purpose of the human soul ;  
 And knows, where faith, law, morals, all began,  
 All end, in love of God, and love of man. 340

For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,  
 And opens still, and opens on his soul ;  
 Till lengthened on to Faith and unconfined,  
 It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.  
 He sees, why Nature plants in man alone 345  
 Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown :  
 (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind  
 Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find)  
 Wise in her present ; she connects in this  
 His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss, 350  
 At once his own bright prospect to be blest,  
 And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus pushed to social, to divine,  
 Gives thee to make thy neighbor's blessing thine.  
 Is this too little for the boundless heart ? 355

Extend it, let thy enemies have part :  
 Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,  
 In one close system of benevolence :  
 Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,  
 And height of Bliss but height of Charity. 360

God loves from whole to parts : but human soul  
 Must rise from individual to the whole.  
 Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
 As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake ;  
 The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds, 365  
 Another still, and still another spreads ;  
 Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace ;  
 His country next ; and next all human race ;  
 Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind  
 Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind ; 370  
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
 And heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come, then, my Friend ! my Genius ! come along ;  
 Oh, master of the poet, and the song !  
 And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends, 375  
 To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,  
 Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,  
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise ;  
 Formed by thy converse, happily to steer  
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe ; 380  
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,  
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.

Oh, while along the stream of time thy name  
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,  
 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail, 385  
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale ?  
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,

Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,  
Shall then this verse to future age pretend  
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend ? 390  
That urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art  
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart ;  
For wit's false mirror held up Nature's light ;  
Showed erring pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT ;  
That reason, passion, answer one great aim ; 395  
That true Self-love and Social are the same ;  
That Virtue only makes our bliss below ;  
And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.

## THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

Some passages in the "Essay on Man" having been unjustly suspected of a tendency towards Fate and Naturalism, the author composed a prayer as the sum of all, which was intended to show that his system was founded in Free-will and terminated in Piety.  
—FROM WARBURTON.

DEO. OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all ! in ev'ry age,  
In ev'ry clime adored,  
By saint, by savage, and by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord !

Thou Great First Cause, least understood :  
Who all my sense confined  
To know but this, that Thou art good,  
And that myself am blind ;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,  
To see the good from ill ;  
And binding Nature fast in Fate,  
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do,  
This, teach me more than hell to shun,  
That, more than heav'n pursue.

What blessings Thy free bounty gives,  
Let me not cast away ;  
For God is paid when man receives :  
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span  
Thy goodness led me bound,  
Or think Thee Lord alone of man,  
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand  
Presume Thy bolts to throw,  
And deal damnation round the land  
On each I judge Thy foe.

If I am right, Thy grace impart,  
Still in the right to stay ;  
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart  
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride  
Or impious discontent,  
At aught Thy wisdom has denied,  
Or aught Thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see ;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,  
Since quickened by Thy breath ;  
Oh, lead me wheresoe'er I go,  
Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot :  
All else beneath the sun,  
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not ;  
And let Thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,  
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,  
One chorus let all being raise ;  
All nature's incense rise !





## PREFACE TO THE "ESSAY ON CRITICISM."

FROM the point of view of criticism, this poem ranks among the phenomena of literature. It was written when Pope was in his twenty-first year, but shows the maturity of a man of forty, or of one grown old in critical research. He began very early to study Chaucer, Spenser, and Dryden. As a boy he found delight in Homer, Vergil, and Ovid. His frequent annotations from Quintilian show that he made that author the object of studious reflection. Trumbull, "Pope's schoolmaster in poetry," was the first to turn the young poet's attention to the study of the French critics. Evidence of this study is found in Pope's flattering allusion to Boileau, whose writings were a strong factor in forming the style of the French writers of his day.

The aim of the poet in this Essay is not to make an original contribution to the art of Criticism, nor to write an exact treatise on Poetry, but to reduce to an orderly method the current opinions of the wiser critics, and to accentuate the leading principles of good writing. His purpose was, succinct, poignant, luminous expression : to state in cogent English "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Among the noticeable features of this engaging poem are these :

(I) Its noble appeal to nature (52-74).

(II) Its incisive analysis of human motive (583, 631-42).

(III) Its pre-eminent good sense (574-8).

(IV) Its cutting satire (35-44, 593-9, 610-21).

(V) Its fitting simile (9, 10, 86, 87, 243-52, 315-17, 585-7).

The aphoristic character of this poem is marked. Like the *Essay on Man*, its finest thoughts are salient, proverbial, and quotable, as for example :

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing.”

“ Words are like leaves ; and where they most abound  
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.”

“ To err is human, to forgive divine.”

“ To make each day a critic on the last.”

“ For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

“ For each ill author is as bad a friend.”

# AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1709. PUBLISHED 1711.

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600. And of an impertinent critic, ver. 610, etc. Character of a good critic, ver. 629. The history of criticism and characters of the best critics. Aristotle, ver. 645. Horace, ver. 653. Dionysius, ver. 665. Petronius, ver. 667. Quintilian, ver. 670. Longinus, ver. 675. Of the decay of criticism and its revival; Erasmus, ver. 693. Vida, ver. 705. Boileau, ver. 714. Lord Roscommon, etc., 725. Conclusion.

'T is hard to say, if greater want of skill  
 Appear in writing or in judging ill ;  
 But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' offence  
 To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.  
 Some few in that, but numbers err in this, 5  
 Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss ;  
 A fool might once himself alone expose,  
 Now one in verse makes many more in prose.  
 'T is with our judgments as our watches, none  
 Go just alike, yet each believes his own. 10  
 In poets as true genius is but rare,  
 True taste as seldom is the critic's share ;  
 Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,  
 These born to judge, as well as those to write.  
 Let such teach others, who themselves excel, 15  
 And censure freely who have written well.  
 Authors are partial to their wit, 't is true,  
 But are not critics to their judgment too ?  
 Yet if we look more closely, we shall find  
 Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind : 20  
 Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light ;  
 The lines, though touched but faintly, are drawn right.  
 But as the slightest sketch, if justly traced,  
 Is by ill-coloring but the more disgraced,  
 So by false learning is good sense defaced : 25  
 Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,  
 And some made coxcombs nature meant but fools.  
 In search of wit these lose their common sense,

And then turn critics in their own defence :  
 Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write, 30  
 Or with a rival's, or an eunuch's spite.  
 All fools have still an itching to deride,  
 And fain would be upon the laughing side.  
 If Mævius scribble in Apollo's spite,  
 There are, who judge still worse than he can write. 35

Some have at first for wits, then poets past,  
 Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last.  
 Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,  
 As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.  
 Those half-learned witlings, num'rous in our isle, 40  
 As half-formed insects on the banks of Nile ;  
 Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,  
 Their generation 's so equivocal ;  
 To tell 'm, would a hundred tongues require,  
 Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire. 45

But you who seek to give and merit fame,  
 And justly bear a critic's noble name,  
 Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,  
 How far your genius, taste, and learning go ;  
 Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet, 50  
 And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.

Nature to all things fixed the limits fit,  
 And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit.  
 As on the land while here the ocean gains,  
 In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains ; 55  
 Thus in the soul while memory prevails,  
 The solid pow'r of understanding fails ;  
 Where beams of warm imagination play,  
 The memory's soft figures melt away.  
 One science only will one genius fit ; 60  
 So vast is art, so narrow human wit :  
 Not only bounded to peculiar arts,  
 But oft in those confined to single parts.

Like kings we lose the conquests gained before,  
By vain ambition still to make them more ; 65  
Each might his sev'ral province well command,  
Would all but stoop to what they understand.

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame  
By her just standard, which is still the same :  
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright, 70  
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,  
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,  
At once the source, and end, and test of art.  
Art from that fund each just supply provides,  
Works without show, and without pomp presides ; 75  
In some fair body thus th' informing soul  
With spirits feeds, with vigor fills the whole,  
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains ;  
Itself unseen, but in th' effects, remains.

Some, to whom Heav'n in wit has been profuse, 80  
Want as much more to turn it to its use ;  
For wit and judgment often are at strife :  
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.  
'T is more to guide than spur the Muse's steed ;  
Restrain his fury than provoke his speed ; 85

The wingèd courser, like a gen'rous horse,  
Shows most true metal when you check his course.

Those rules of old discovered, not devised,  
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized ;  
Nature, like Liberty, is but restrained 90  
By the same laws which first herself ordained.

Hear how learned Greece her useful rules indites,  
When to repress and when indulge our flights ;  
High on Parnassus' top her sons she showed,  
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod ; 95  
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,  
And urged the rest by equal steps to rise,  
Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,

She drew from them what they derived from Heav'n.  
 The gen'rous critic fanned the poet's fire, 100  
 And taught the world with reason to admire.  
 Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid proved,  
 To dress her charms and make her more beloved :  
 But following wits from that intention strayed,  
 Who could not win the mistress, wooed the maid ; 105  
 Against the poets their own arms they turned,  
 Sure to hate most the men from whom they learned.  
 So modern 'Pothecaries, taught the art  
 By doctor's bills to play the doctor's part,  
 Bold in the practice of mistaken rules, 110  
 Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.  
 Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,  
 Nor time nor moths e'er spoiled so much as they.  
 Some drily plain, without invention's aid,  
 Write dull receipts how poems may be made : 115  
 These leave the sense, their learning to display,  
 And those explain the meaning quite away.

You then whose judgment the right course would steer,  
 Know well each ancient's proper character ;  
 His fable, subject, scope in ev'ry page ; 120  
 Religion, country, genius of his age ;  
 Without all these at once before your eyes,  
 Cavil you may, but never criticise.  
 Be Homer's works your study and delight,  
 Read them by day, and meditate by night ; 125  
 Thence form your judgment, thence your maxim's bring,  
 And trace the Muses upward to their spring.  
 Still with itself compared, his text peruse ;  
 And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.

When first young Maro in his boundless mind 130  
 A work t' outlast immortal Rome designed,  
 Perhaps he seemed above the critic's law,  
 And but from Nature's fountains scorned to draw ;

But when t' examine ev'ry part he came,  
 Nature and Homer were, he found, the same. 135  
 Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design ;  
 And rules as strict his labored work confine,  
 As if the Stagirite o'erlooked each line.  
 Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem ;  
 To copy nature is to copy them. 140

Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,  
 For there 's a happiness as well as care.  
 Music resembles poetry ; in each  
 Are nameless graces which no methods teach,  
 And which a master-hand alone can reach. 145  
 If, where the rules not far enough extend,  
 (Since rules were made but to promote their end,)  
 Some lucky license answer to the full  
 Th' intent proposed, that license is a rule.  
 Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take, 150  
 May boldly deviate from the common track.  
 From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,  
 And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,  
 Which, without passing through the judgment, gains  
 The heart, and all its end at once attains. 155  
 In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,  
 Which out of nature's common order rise,  
 The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.  
 Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
 And rise to faults true critics dare not mend. 160  
 But though the ancients thus their rules invade,  
 (As kings dispense with laws themselves have made,)  
 Moderns, beware ! or if you must offend  
 Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end ;  
 Let it be seldom, and compelled by need ; 165  
 And have, at least, their precedent to plead.  
 The critic else proceeds without remorse,  
 Seizes your fame and puts his laws in force.



I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts  
 Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults. 170  
 Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear,  
 Considered singly, or beheld too near,  
 Which, but proportioned to their light or place,  
 Due distance reconciles to form and grace.  
 A prudent chief not always must display 175  
 His pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array ;  
 But with th' occasion and the place comply,  
 Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.  
 Those oft are stratagems which error seem,  
 Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream. 180

Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,  
 Above the reach of sacrilegious hands ;  
 Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,  
 Destructive war, and all-involving age.  
 See, from each clime the learned their incense bring ! 185  
 Hear, in all tongues consenting Pæans ring !  
 In praise so just let ev'ry voice be joined,  
 And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.  
 Hail, bards triumphant ! born in happier days ;  
 Immortal heirs of universal praise ! 190  
 Whose honors with increase of ages grow,  
 As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow ;  
 Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,  
 And worlds applaud that must not yet be found !  
 Oh, may some spark of your celestial fire 195  
 The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,  
 (That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights,  
 Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes,)  
 To teach vain wits a science little known,  
 T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own ! 200

## II.

OF all the causes which conspire to blind  
 Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,  
 What the weak head with strongest bias rules,  
 Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.  
 Whatever nature has in worth denied, 205  
 She gives in large recruits of needful pride ;  
 For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find  
 What wants in blood and spirits, swelled with wind :  
 Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,  
 And fills up all the mighty void of sense. 210  
 If once right reason drives that cloud away,  
 Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.  
 Trust not yourself ; but, your defects to know  
 Make use of ev'ry friend — and ev'ry foe.  
 { A little learning is a dang'rous thing ; 215  
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring :  
 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
 And drinking largely sobers us again.  
 Fired at first sight with what the muse imparts,  
 In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts, 220  
 While from the bounded level of our mind  
 Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind ;  
 But, more advanced, behold with strange surprise  
 New distant scenes of endless science rise !  
 So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try, 225  
 Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,  
 Th' eternal snows appear already past,  
 And the first clouds and mountains seem the last ;  
 But, those attained, we tremble to survey  
 The growing labors of the lengthened way, 230  
 Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,  
 Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise !  
 A perfect judge will read each work of wit

With the same spirit that its author writ ;  
 Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find 235  
 Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind ;  
 Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,  
 The gen'rous pleasure to be charmed with wit.  
 But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,  
 Correctly cold, and regularly low, 240  
 That, shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep ;  
 We cannot blame indeed — but we may sleep.  
 In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts  
 Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts ;  
 'T is not a lip, nor eye, we beauty call, 245  
 But the joint force and full result of all.  
 Thus, when we view some well-proportioned dome,  
 (The world's just wonder, and even thine, O Rome !)  
 No single parts unequally surprise,  
 All comes united to th' admiring eyes : 250  
 No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear ;  
 The whole at once is bold and regular.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
 Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.  
 In ev'ry work regard the writer's end, 255  
 Since none can compass more than they intend ;  
 And if the means be just, the conduct true,  
 Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.  
 As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,  
 T' avoid great errors, must the less commit : 260  
 Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,  
 For not to know some trifles is a praise.  
 Most critics, fond of some subservient art,  
 Still make the whole depend upon a part :  
 They talk of principles, but notions prize, 265  
 And all to one loved folly sacrifice.

Once on a time, La Mancha's knight, they say,  
 A certain bard encount'ring on the way,

Discoursed in terms as just, with looks as sage,  
 As e'er could Dennis of the Grecian stage ; 270  
 Concluding all were desp'rate sots and fools,  
 Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.  
 Our author, happy in a judge so nice,  
 Produced his play, and begged the knight's advice ;  
 Made him observe the subject, and the plot, 275  
 The manners, passions, unities ; what not ?  
 All which, exact to rule, were brought about,  
 Were but a combat in the lists left out.  
 "What ! leave the combat out ?" exclaims the knight ;  
 "Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite." 280  
 "Not so, by Heav'n" (he answers in a rage),  
 "Knights, squires, and steeds must enter on the stage."  
 "So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain."  
 "Then build a new, or act it in a plain."  
 Thus critics, of less judgment than caprice, 285  
 Curious not knowing, not exact but nice,  
 Form short ideas ; and offend in arts,  
 (As most in manners) by a love to parts.  
 Some to conceit alone their taste confine,  
 And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line ; 290  
 Pleased with a work where nothing 's just or fit ;  
 One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.  
 Poets like painters, thus unskilled to trace  
 The naked nature and the living grace,  
 With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part, 295  
 And hide with ornaments their want of art.  
 True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,  
 What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed ;  
 Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,  
 That gives us back the image of our mind. 300  
 As shades more sweetly recommend the light,  
 So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.  
 For works may have more wit than does them good,

As bodies perish through excess of blood.

Others for language all their care express, 305

And value books, as women men, for dress :

Their praise is still,— the style is excellent :

The sense they humbly take upon content.

Words are like leaves ; and where they most abound

Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found : 310

False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,

Its gaudy colors spreads on ev'ry place ;

The face of Nature we no more survey,

All glares alike, without distinction gay :

But true expression, like th' unchanging sun, 315

Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,

It gilds all objects, but it alters none.

Expression is the dress of thought, and still

Appears more decent, as more suitable ;

A vile conceit in pompous words expressed 320

Is like a clown in regal purple dressed :

For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,

As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court.

Some by old words to fame have made pretence,

Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense ; 325

Such labored nothings, in so strange a style,

Amaze th' unlearned, and make the learned smile.

Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play,

These sparks with awkward vanity display

What the fine gentleman wore yesterday ; 330

And but so mimic ancient wits at best,

As apes our grandsires in their doublets drest.

In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold ;

Alike fantastic, if too new, or old :

Be not the first by whom the new are tried, 335

Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

But most by numbers judge a poet's song ;

And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong :

In the bright Muse, though thousand charms conspire,  
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire ; 340  
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
Not mend their minds ; as some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.  
These equal syllables alone require,  
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire ; 345  
While expletives their feeble aid do join ;  
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line ;  
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,  
With sure returns of still expected rhymes ;  
Where'er you find " the cooling western breeze," 350  
In the next line, it " whispers through the trees " :  
If crystal streams " with pleasing murmurs creep,"  
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with " sleep " :  
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught  
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought, 355  
A needless Alexandrine ends the song  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.  
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know  
What's roundly smooth or languishingly slow ;  
And praise the easy vigor of a line, 360  
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.  
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.  
'T is not enough no harshness gives offence,  
The sound must seem an echo to the sense : 365  
Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows ;  
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar :  
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw, 370  
The line, too, labors, and the words move slow ;  
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,  
 And bid alternate passions fall and rise ! 375  
 While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove  
 Now burns with glory, and then melts with love ;  
 Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,  
 Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow :  
 Persians and Greeks like turns of Nature found, 380  
 And the world's victor stood subdued by sound !  
 The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,  
 And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.

Avoid extremes ; and shun the fault of such,  
 Who still are pleased too little or too much. 385  
 At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence,  
 That always shows great pride, or little sense ;  
 Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,  
 Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.  
 Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move ; 390  
 For fools admire, but men of sense approve :  
 As things seem large which we through mists desery,  
 Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

Some, foreign writers, some, our own despise ;  
 The ancients only, or the moderns prize. 395  
 Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied  
 To one small sect, and all are damned beside.  
 Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,  
 And force that sun but on a part to shine,  
 Which not alone the southern wit sublimes, 400  
 But ripens spirits in cold northern climes ;  
 Which from the first has shone on ages past,  
 Enlights the present, and shall warm the last ;  
 Though each may feel increases and decays,  
 And see now clearer and now darker days. 405  
 Regard not then if wit be old or new,  
 But blame the false, and value still the true.

Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own



But catch the spreading notion of the town :  
They reason and conclude by precedent, 410  
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.  
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then  
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.  
Of all this servile herd the worst is he  
That in proud dulness joins with quality ; 415  
A constant critic at the great man's board,  
To fetch and carry nonsense for my lord.  
What woeful stuff this madrigal would be,  
In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me !  
But let a lord once own the happy lines, 420  
How the wit brightens ! how the style refines !  
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,  
And each exalted stanza teems with thought !  
The vulgar thus through imitation err,  
As oft the learned by being singular ; 425  
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng  
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong ;  
So schismatics the plain believers quit,  
And are but damned for having too much wit.  
Some praise at morning what they blame at night ; 430  
But always think the last opinion right.  
A Muse by these is like a mistress used,  
This hour she's idolized, the next abused ;  
While their weak heads like towns unfortified,  
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side. 435  
Ask them the cause ; they're wiser still, they say ;  
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.  
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow ;  
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.  
Once school-divines this zealous isle o'erspread ; 440  
Who knew most sentences, was deepest read ;  
Faith, gospel, all, seemed made to be disputed,  
And none has sense enough to be confuted :



Scotists and Thomists, now, in peace remain  
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane. 445

If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,  
What wonder modes in wit should take their turn?  
Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,  
The current folly proves the ready wit,  
And authors think their reputation safe, 450  
Which lives as long as fools are pleased to laugh.

Some valuing those of their own side or mind,  
Still make themselves the measure of mankind :  
Fondly we think we honor merit then,  
When we but praise ourselves in other men. 455

Parties in wit attend on those of State,  
And public faction doubles private hate.  
Pride, malice, folly, against Dryden rose,  
In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaux ;  
But sense survived, when merry jests were past, 460  
For rising merit will buoy up at last.

Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,  
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise :  
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,  
Zoilus again would start up from the dead. 465

Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue,  
But, like a shadow, proves the substance true :  
For envied wit, like Sol eclipsed, makes known  
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.  
When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays, 470  
It draws up vapors which obscure its rays ;  
But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,  
Reflect new glories, and augment the day.

Be thou the first true merit to befriend ;  
His praise is lost, who stays till all commend. 475  
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,  
And 't is but just to let them live betimes.  
No longer now that golden age appears,

When patriarch-wits survived a thousand years :  
 Now length of fame (our second life) is lost, 480  
 And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast ;  
 Our sons their fathers' failing language see,  
 And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.  
 So, when the faithful pencil has designed  
 Some bright idea of the master's mind, 485  
 Where a new world leaps out at his command,  
 And ready Nature waits upon his hand ;  
 When the ripe colors soften and unite,  
 And sweetly melt into just shade and light ;  
 When mellowing years their full perfection give, 490  
 And each bold figure just begins to live,  
 The treach'rous colors the fair art betray,  
 And all the bright creation fades away !

Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,  
 Atones not for that envy which it brings. 495  
 In youth alone its empty praise we boast,  
 But soon the short-lived vanity is lost ;  
 Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,  
 That gaily blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.  
 What is this wit, which must our cares employ ? 500  
 The owner's wife, that other men enjoy ;  
 Then most our trouble still when most admired,  
 And still the more we give, the more required ;  
 Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,  
 Sure some to vex, but never all to please ; 505  
 'T is what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,  
 By fools 't is hated, and by knaves undone !

If wit so much from ign'rance undergo,  
 Ah, let not learning, too, commence its foe !  
 Of old, those met rewards who could excel, 510  
 And such were praised who but endeavored well :  
 Though triumphs were to gen'als only due,  
 Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too !

Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,  
Employ their pains to spurn some others down ; 515  
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,  
Contending wits become the sport of fools ;  
But still the worst with most regret commend,  
For each ill author is as bad a friend.

To what base ends, and by what abject ways, 520  
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise !  
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,  
Nor in the critic let the man be lost.  
Good nature and good sense must ever join ;  
To err is human, to forgive, divine. 525

But if in noble minds some dregs remain  
Not yet purged off, of spleen and sour disdain ;  
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,  
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.  
No pardon vile obscenity should find, 530  
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind ;  
But dulness with obscenity must prove  
As shameful sure as impotence in love.  
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,  
Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large in-  
crease ; 535

When love was all an easy monarch's care ;  
Seldom at council, never in a war :  
Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ :  
Nay, wits had pensions, and young lords had wit,  
The fair sat panting at a courtier's play, 540  
And not a mask went unimproved away :  
The modest fan was lifted up no more,  
And virgins smiled at what they blushed before.  
The following license of a foreign reign  
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain ; 545  
Then unbelieving priests reformed the nation,  
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation ;

Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,  
 Lest God Himself should seem too absolute ;  
 Pulpits their sacred satire learned to spare, 550  
 And vice admired to find a flatterer there !  
 Encouraged thus, wit's Titans braved the skies,  
 And the press groaned with licensed blasphemies.  
 These monsters, critics ! with your darts engage,  
 Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage ! 555  
 Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,  
 Will needs mistake an author into vice ;  
 All seems infected that th' infected spy,  
 As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

## III.

Learn then what morals critics ought to show, 560  
 For 't is but half a judge's task to know.  
 'T is not enough, taste, judgment, learning, join ;  
 In all you speak, let truth and candor shine :  
 That not alone what to your sense is due  
 All may allow ; but seek your friendship too. 565  
 Be silent always when you doubt your sense ;  
 And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence :  
 Some positive, persisting fops we know,  
 Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so ;  
 But you, with pleasure, own your errors past, 570  
 And make each day a critic on the last.  
 'T is not enough, your counsel still be true ;  
 Blunt truth more mischief than nice falsehoods do ;  
 Men must be taught as if you taught them not,  
 And things unknown proposed as things forgot. 575  
 Without good breeding, truth is disapproved ;  
 That only makes superior sense beloved.  
 Be niggards of advice on no pretence,  
 For the worst avarice is that of sense.

With mean complacence ne'er betray your trust, 580  
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.

Fear not the anger of the wise to raise ;  
Those best can bear reproof who merit praise.

'T were well might critics still this freedom take,  
But Appius reddens at each word you speak, 585  
And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,  
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.

Fear most to tax an honorable fool,  
Whose right it is, uncensured, to be dull ;  
Such, without wit, are poets when they please, 590  
As without learning they can take degrees.

Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful satires,  
And flattery to fulsome dedicators,  
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more  
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er. 595

'T is best sometimes your censure to restrain,

(And charitably let the dull be vain :

Your silence there is better than your spite,  
For who can rail so long as they can write ?  
Still humming on, their drowsy course they keep, 600  
And lashed so long, like tops, are lashed asleep ;  
False steps but help them to renew the race,  
As, after stumbling, jades will mend their pace.

What crowds of these impenitently bold,  
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old, 605  
Still run on poets, in a raging vein,  
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,  
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,  
And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.

Such shameless bards we have ; and yet 't is true, 610  
There are as mad abandoned critics too.

The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,  
With loads of learned lumber in his head,  
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,

And always list'ning to himself appears. 615  
 All books he reads, and all he reads assails,  
 From Dryden's fables down to Durfey's tales.  
 With him, most authors steal their works, or buy ;  
 Garth did not write his own Dispensary.  
 Name a new play, and he 's the poet's friend, 620  
 Nay, showed his faults—but when would poets mend ?  
 No place so sacred from such fops is barred,  
 Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard :  
 Nay, fly to altars ; there they 'll talk you dead :  
 For fools rush in where angels fear to tread. 625  
 Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,  
 It still looks home, and short excursions makes ;  
 But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,  
 And never shocked, and never turned aside,  
 Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide. 630  
 But, where 's the man who counsel can bestow,  
 Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know ?  
 Unbiassed, or by favor, or by spite ;  
 Not dully prepossessed, nor blindly right :  
 Though learned, well-bred ; and though well-bred,  
     sincere, 635  
 Modestly bold, and humanly severe :  
 Who to a friend his faults can freely show,  
 And gladly praise the merit of a foe ?  
 Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined ;  
 A knowledge both of books and human kind : 640  
 Gen'rous converse ; a soul exempt from pride ;  
 And love to praise, with reason on his side ?  
 Such once were critics ; such the happy few  
 Athens and Rome in better ages knew.  
 The mighty Stagirite first left the shore, 645  
 Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore :  
 He steered securely, and discovered far,  
 Led by the light of the Mæonian star.

Poets, a race long unconfined, and free,  
Still fond and proud of savage liberty, 650  
Received his laws ; and stood convinced 't was fit,  
Who conquered Nature, should preside o'er wit.

Horace still charms with graceful negligence,  
And without method talks us into sense,  
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey 655  
The truest notions in the easiest way.

He who, supreme in judgment, as in wit,  
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,  
Yet judg'd with coolness, though he sung with fire ;  
His precepts teach but what his works inspire. 660

Our critics take a contrary extreme,  
They judge with fury, but they write with phlegm :  
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong translations  
By wits, than critics in as wrong quotations.

See Dionysius Homer's thoughts refine, 665  
And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line !

Fancy and art in gay Petronius please,  
The scholar's learning, with the courtier's ease.

In grave Quintilian's copious work, we find  
The justest rules and clearest method joined : 670  
Thus useful arms in magazines we place,  
All ranged in order and disposed with grace,  
But less to please the eye than arm the hand,  
Still fit for use, and ready at command.

Thee, bold Longinus ! all the Nine inspire, 675  
And bless their critic with a poet's fire.

An ardent judge, who zealous in his trust,  
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just ;  
Whose own example strengthens all his laws ;  
And is himself that great sublime he draws. 680

Thus long succeeding critics justly reigned,  
License repressed, and useful laws ordained.  
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew ;



And arts still followed where her eagles flew ;  
 From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom, 685  
 And the same age saw learning fall, and Rome.  
 With tyranny, then superstition joined,  
 As that the body, this enslaved the mind ;  
 Much was believed, but little understood,  
 And to be dull was construed to be good ; 690  
 A second deluge learning thus o'er-run,  
 And the monks finished what the Goths begun.

At length Erasmus—that great injured name,  
 (The glory of the priesthood, and the shame !)  
 Stemmed the wild torrent of a barb'rous age, 695  
 And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.

But see ! Each muse, in Leo's golden days,  
 Starts from her trance, and trims her withered bays,  
 Rome's ancient genius, o'er its ruins spread,  
 Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head. 700  
 Then sculpture and her sister-arts revive ;  
 Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live ;  
 With sweeter notes each rising temple rung ;  
 A Raphael painted and a Vida sung.  
 Immortal Vida : on whose honored brow 705  
 The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow :  
 Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,  
 As next in place to Mantua, next in fame !

But soon by impious arms from Latium chased,  
 Their ancient bounds the banished Muses passed ; 710  
 Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance,  
 But critic learning flourished most in France :  
 The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys ;  
 And Boileau still in right of Horace sways.  
 But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised, 715  
 And kept unconquered, and uncivilized ;  
 Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,  
 We still defied the Romans, as of old.



Yet some there were, among the sounder few  
 Of those who less presumed, and better knew, 720  
 Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,  
 And here restored wit's fundamental laws.  
 Such was the muse, whose rules and practice tell,  
 "Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well."  
 Such was Roscommon, not more learned than good, 725  
 With manners gen'rous as his noble blood ;  
 To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,  
 And ev'ry author's merit but his own.  
 Such late was Walsh—the muse's judge and friend,  
 Who justly knew to blame or to commend ; 730  
 To failings mild, but zealous for desert ;  
 The clearest head and the sincerest heart.  
 This humble praise, lamented shade ! receive,  
 This praise at least a grateful muse may give ;  
 The muse, whose early voice you taught to sing, 735  
 Prescribed her heights, and pruned her tender wing,  
 (Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,  
 But in low numbers short excursions tries :  
 Content, if hence th' unlearned their wants may view,  
 The learned reflect on what before they knew : 740  
 Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame ;  
 Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame,  
 Averse alike to flatter, or offend ;  
 Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.



# NOTES

## ON

### AN ESSAY ON MAN.

#### Epistle I.

Line 1. "Awake, my St. John." Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751). His career as a statesman and orator was brilliant and meteoric. He was a bitter partisan, a Tory of the Tories. He was a man of commanding presence, and faultless manners. His personality was magnetic. His power over some men was hypnotic, among them Pope. He has been called the English Alcibiades. His dissipated and graceless career greatly hampered his public influence. He possessed some literary ability. His principal works are *The Idea of a Patriot King* and *Letters on the Study and Use of History*.

Line 13. "Shoot folly as it flies." Suggested by Dryden's line, "and shoots their treasons as they fly" (*Absalom and Achitophel*, Part II). See also same work suggesting line 226. Pope was an ardent and reverent admirer of Dryden, and in many poems betrays the influence of the great poet, "the least inspired and the most classical."—Taine, Bk. III, chap. 7.

Line 16. "But vindicate the ways of God to man." See Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I, line 22.

Line 32. "Can a part contain the whole?" suggests the Platonism, "The part is created for the sake of the whole, and not the whole for the sake of the part."

Line 33. "Is the great chain?" alludes to the golden chain by which Homer tells us the world was sustained by Jove.

Line 41. "Yonder argent fields above." "Argent"; shining, silvery.

"Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize  
One thought beyond thine *argent* luxuries."

Keats, *Endymion*, III.

Line 45. "Where all must full or not coherent be"; *i. e.*, there can be no break, for if there be one, cohesion is destroyed.

Line 53. "Though labored on with pain." From Bolingbroke, *Fragments*, 43 and 63.

Line 64. "And now Egypt's god." Among the Egyptians the ox was worshipped under the title of Apis.

Line 88. "Or a sparrow fall." St. Matt. 10 : 29.

Line 98. "Expatiates," to move at will, to wander without restraint. See Pope's use of the same word in his *Windsor Forest*, I, 254 : "Bids his free soul *expatiate* in the skies."

Lines 99-112. "To my feeling, one of the most beautiful passages in the whole poem."—J. R. Lowell, *Literary Essays*, IV, 40.

Line 144. "Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?" Recalling the awful catastrophe of Lisbon and Scilla, and more recently the island of Ischia and of Java.

Line 156. "Why then a Borgia?" Caesar Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander VI, cardinal and soldier. Infamous in character, maliciously cruel to his enemies. "Catiline." Roman conspirator against his country.

Line 160. "Or turns young Ammon loose." Young Ammon, Alexander the Great, saluted as Jupiter Ammon.

Line 174. "Little less than angel." Ps. 8 : 9.

Line 182. "Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force." "It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened ; or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated."—Pope.

Line 193. "Why has not man a microscopic eye?" A vivid expression, taken from Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* (Bk. II, chap. 3, sec. 12), a work which shapes the argument of Pope.

Line 213. "The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this : at their first going out in the night-time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackal's hunting for the lion was occasioned by observation of this defect of scent in that terrible animal."—Pope.

Line 241. "On superior pow'rs," reminds the reader of Thomson's *Seasons*, "Summer."

Line 260. "Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head?" Taken from St. Paul (1 Cor. 12 : 15-21).

Line 265. "Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains." "See the Prosecution and Application of this in Epistle IV."—Pope.

Line 288. "Or in the natal, or the mortal hour," reminds one of Goethe's remark in childhood: "God knows very well that an immortal soul can receive no injury from a mortal accident."—Ward.

Line 294. "Whatever is, is right." See Dryden's *Ædipus*, Act III, Scene 1.

### Epistle II.

Line 5. "With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side," etc. "Sceptic," one of the names chosen by the followers of Pyrrhon, whose philosophy was negative, while Stoics proclaimed the positive philosophy of the full performance of duty and the pursuit of virtue.

Line 17. "In endless error hurled." "To hurl signifies not simply to cast, but to cast backward and forward, and is taken from the rural game called hurling."—Warburton.

Line 27. "As eastern priests," etc., for example, the priests of the Sun-God Baal.

Lines 29, 30. "Go, teach Eternal Wisdom," etc. The conclusion of all that has been said from line 18.

Line 46. "Learning's luxury, or idleness," refers to the inflated passion of the times, making great pretences to learning and cultivating ease, luxury, and idleness.

Line 50. "Of all our vices have created arts." Even out of vices have arts been produced, as for example Gastronomy and Epicureanism.

Line 59. "Acts," for actuates.

Line 74. "Reason, the future and the consequence." Reason here stands between arguments from the past and the ethical experiences of the future.

Lines 81-92. "Let subtle schoolmen," etc. A fine analysis of the relation of self-love to reason. They are not mutually antagonistic, but interrelated and supplementary, the one of the other. Both tend to happiness; the first quickly appropriates what is for its good, the second scrutinizes and weighs evidence as to permanent values.

Line 96. "Reason bids us for our own provide." See St. Paul's words in 1 Tim. 5 : 8.

Line 98. "List," *i.e.*, enlist or range themselves.

Line 101. "In lazy apathy let Stoics boast." Warton objects to this line on the ground that Stoicism does not consist in total

insensibility with respect to feeling, but a rational freedom from irrational and excessive agitations of the soul.

Line 108. "Card," *i.e.*, the compass.

Line 200. "In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine." Decius, an heroic Roman Consul of Plebeian rank, killed in the battle of Vesuvius, 340 B.C. Legend has it that a chasm was opened by an earthquake in the Roman Forum (362 B.C.). It could be closed only by the sacrifice of Rome's most costly treasure. Marcus Curtius, affirming that the state possessed no greater treasure than a brave citizen, leaped into the chasm, mounted and full-armed. Then the chasm closed.

Line 204. "The God within the mind." From Plato's lofty conception of conscience.

Line 218. "As, to be hated, needs but to be seen." Compare Dryden's thought :

"For truth has such a face and such a mien,  
As to be loved needs only to be seen."

*The Hind and the Panther*, line 33.

Line 223. "The Orcades." The Orkney Islands at the extreme north of Scotland.

Line 224. "Zembla." Nova Zembla, islands north of Russia.

Line 269. "The starving chemist," etc., alludes to the passionate search of the alchemist for the philosopher's stone.

### Epistle III.

Line 46. "A pampered goose," suggested by Pierre Charron, *De la Sagesse*.

Line 50. "Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole." Wit used for intellect, by which man rules the whole animal kingdom.

Line 56. "Philomela." Daughter of Pandion in Greek legend. She was metamorphosed into a nightingale.

Line 68. "Than favored man," etc. Several of the ancients, and many of the orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons and the particular favorites of Heaven.

Line 104. "Demoivre." Trisyllabic to preserve the meter. The distinguished French mathematician, born at Vitry, in Champagne, 1667, died in London, 1754. The allusion in the poem is to his fame in trigonometry. He was a friend of Newton.

Line 152. "Man walked with beast, joint tenant of the shade."  
 "Plato had said from old tradition, that, during the Golden Age and under the reign of Saturn, the primitive language then in use was common to man and beast. . . . The naturalists understood the tradition to signify that in the first ages man used inarticulate sounds, like beasts, to express their wants and sensations; and that it was by slow degrees they came to the use of speech."  
 —Warburton.

Line 168. "And turned on man a fiercer savage, Man": a thought which Robert Burns has made prominent:

"Man's inhumanity to man  
 Makes countless thousands mourn."

Line 173. "Learn from the birds," etc. Taken from Lord Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. II.

Line 174. "Learn from the beasts," etc. Pliny (*Nat'l Hist.*, L. viii., c. 27) gives several instances where animals use herbs for their medicinal effects.

Line 177. "Learn of the little nautilus to sail." Appian describes this fish in the following manner: "They swim on the surface of the sea, on the back of their shells, which exactly resemble the hulk of a ship: they raise two feet like masts, and extend a membrane between, which serves as a sail; the other two feet they employ as oars at the side. They are usually seen in the Mediterranean." — Pope. See another feature of this remarkable shell-fish in O. W. Holmes's exquisite poem: *The Chambered Nautilus*.

Line 211. "'T was Virtue only," etc. Like Aristotle (*Polit*, V, 10, 3). Pope places the origin of kingship in virtue.

Line 231. "Ere wit oblique," etc. Referring to the separation of the beam of light into its prismatic colors.

Line 242. "Th' enormous faith of many made for one." The monstrous heresy that many are to serve one, — "the mania of the Cæsars." Aristotle makes this the basis of his distinction between a king and a tyrant. The first regards himself made for the people, the second the people made for him.

Line 265. "Then first the Flamen tasted living food." The sacrifice of animals on the altar.

Line 266. "Next his grim idol smeared with human blood."  
 See Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I, v. 392:

“ First Molock, horrid king, *besmear'd with blood*  
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears.”

Line 306. “ He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”  
Cowley, on the death of Crashaw, had written :

“ His faith, perhaps, in some nice tenets might  
Be wrong : his life, I 'm sure, was in the right.”

Line 314. “ Yet make at once their circle round the sun.” At  
once, *i.e.*, at one and the same time.

Line 315. “ Act the soul.” As in Epis. II., line 59, *actuate*.

#### Epistle IV.

Line 6. “ O'erlooked, seen double.” “ O'erlooked ” by those  
who place happiness in anything exclusive of virtue : “ seen  
double ” “ by those who admit anything else to have a share with  
virtue in procuring happiness : these being the two general mis-  
takes that this epistle is employed in confuting.”—Warburton.

Line 9. “ Shine.” Used substantively. So Whittier :

“ Their vales in misty shadows deep,  
Their rugged peaks in *shine*.”

*The Hilltop.*

Line 15. “ Sincere.” Pure, unalloyed.

Lines 21-26. In these lines the poet refers to the different philo-  
sophic, ethical, and social sects, the Cyrenaic, the Democritic,  
the Epicurean, the Stoic, the Protagorean, the Sceptic.

Line 66. “ Content.” So Shakespeare uses the word : “ Poor  
and *content* is rich and rich enough.”—*Othello*, Act III, Sc. 1.

Line 74. “ Skies.” Alluding to attempt of Titans to scale  
Olympus.

Line 94. “ Bliss to vice, to virtue woe,” *i.e.*, the false doctrine  
that bliss is the product of vice, woe of virtue.

Line 99. “ See Falkland dies.” Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland,  
fell fighting under the imperial standard in the battle of New-  
bury, 1643. Immortalized by Clarendon.

Line 100. “ God-like Turenne.” Henry, Vicomte de Turenne,  
Marshal of France. Killed by a cannon ball at Sasbach in 1675.

Line 101. “ See Sidney bleeds.” Sir Philip Sidney, shot at  
Zutphen, 1586, and died a few days later. Author of the *Arcadia*.

Line 104. “ Lamented Digby.” The Hon. Robert Digby, third  
son of Lord Digby, died 1724. See Pope's *Epitaphs*, VII.



Line 107. "Marseilles' good bishop." M. de Belsance, the heroic Bishop of Marseilles. "In the plague of that city in the year 1720, he distinguished himself by his zeal and activity, being the pastor, the physician, and the magistrate of his flock, whilst that horrid calamity prevailed."—Warton.

Line 110. "A parent to the poor and me." The mother of the poet, Edith Pope, a woman of strong character and sweetness of spirit, died the year this poem was finished, 1733.

Line 123. "Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires!" This is an allusion to the two noted scientists, Empedocles and Pliny, who perished while exploring the volcanic phenomena of Ætna and Vesuvius.

Line 126. "Oh, blameless Bethel!" A friend of Pope's living in Yorkshire.

Line 130. "Chartres' head." F. Chartres, a man of infamous character. See Pope's *Moral Essays*, with the author's own note, III, 20.

Line 137. "Calvin." Protestant reformer and theologian (1509–1564).

Line 148. "Sighed to lose a day." Alluding to the famous exclamation of Titus, on remembering that he had rendered no one any help, "I have lost a day."

Line 153. "Tempts the main." The sea.

"I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the *main*,  
Descry a sail."

Shakespeare, *Othello*, II, 1, 3.

Line 177. "Go, like the Indian." Alluding to Epis. I, 99.

Line 204. "Prunella." Woolen fabric out of which clergymen's gowns were made.

Line 220. "Macedonia's madman," Alexander the Great. "Swede." Charles XII. of Sweden.

Line 235. "Good Aurelius." Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121 to 180), called "The Philosopher" on account of his ardent devotion to the noblest arts. He was the highest type of a noble Roman.

Line 236. As Socrates died from the effects of hemlock, Warton thinks the word "bleed" is misapplied.

Line 240. "Tully's." Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Line 244. "Eugene living." Prince Eugene of Savoy, commander of the royal forces in the war of the Spanish Succession.

Line 257. "Marcellus exiled feels." One of Cæsar's bitterest

enemies. After the battle of Pharsalia, he fled to Mytilene. Assassinated at Athens on his way to Rome.

Line 278. "Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy." Sir William Yonge, a supporter of Sir Robert Walpole.

Line 280. "Gripus." Gripe is a character in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy*. His wife spends his money.

Line 281. "Bacon." Francis Bacon, the talented and accomplished English philosopher, jurist, and statesman. While in the administration of justice (1621) he was tried for bribery. Conviction and confession followed.

Line 283. "The whistling of a name." Compare Cowley, "Charmed with the foolish whistling of a name." See also *Vergil Georgics*, Bk. II, line 72.

Line 284. "Cromwell." Note the honors conferred upon the name of Oliver Cromwell in the year 1899, on the three hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Line 312. "Without the fall," *i.e.*, without any inclination.

Line 332. "Looks through Nature up to Nature's God." is from Bolingbroke's letters to Pope: "One follows nature and nature's God."

Line 341. "Hope leads from goal to goal," etc. Read in this connection Thomas Campbell's exquisite poem, *Pleasures of Hope*.

Line 364. "Stirs the peaceful lake." Taken from the simile of the lake in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, Bk. II, line 280 ff.

# NOTES

## ON

### AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

#### Part I.

Line 9. " 'T is with our judgments as our watches," etc. Evidently suggested by Sir John Suckling's,

" But, as when an authentic watch is shown,  
Each man winds up and rectifies his own,  
So in our very judgments."

Epilogue to *Aglaura*.

Line 16. " And censure freely who have written well." See Matthew Arnold's essay on the " Function of Criticism at the Present Time," where the relation between the Creative and the Critical Art is distinctly pointed out.

Line 17. " Authors are partial to their wit." It is claimed that the word " wit " is used in seven different senses in this essay. Here it means genius, creative talent.

Line 25. " So by false learning is good sense defaced." " Sound judgment without mental training accomplishes more than mental training without sound judgment."—Translated from Quintilian. Quoted by Pope in the original Latin.

Line 34. " If Mævius scribble," etc. An inferior Roman poet.

Line 80. " Some, to whom Heav'n in wit has been profuse." As a variation from this Pope wrote :

There are whom Heav'n has blest with store of wit,  
Yet want as much again to manage it."

Line 98. " Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n." For not by the setting forth of (grammatical) treatises was it brought about that we invented subject-matter, but all things were talked of before they were formally taught ; presently, writers noted and arranged and then published them."—From Quintilian. Quoted by Pope in Latin.

Line 109. "Doctor's bills."—Prescriptions.

Line 129. "Mantuan Muse." Vergil, whose home was Mantua, near which he was born.

Line 130. "Young Maro." The family name of Vergil.

Line 131. "A work t' outlast immortal Rome designed," etc. Vergil, *Eclogue VI*. "It is a tradition preserved by Servius, that Vergil began with writing a poem of the Alban and Roman affairs; which he found above his years, and descended first to imitate Theocritus on rural subjects, and afterwards to copy Homer in heroic poetry."—Pope.

Line 138. "The Stagirite." Aristotle, born in Stagira, Chalcidice, 384 B.C., died 322 B.C. The most distinguished of Greek philosophers. Author of many works on logic and metaphysics. Tutor of Alexander the Great.

Line 150. "Pegasus." In ancient mythology a winged horse, sprung from the blood of Medusa when slain by Perseus.

Line 180. "Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream." "Modestly and with becoming discretion ought people to pass judgment concerning so great genius, lest (as occurs in most cases) they condemn something which they do not understand. And if it is necessary to err in either direction I should prefer to please their readers in all things than to displease them in many."—Translation of Quintilian's words. Pope's quotation of Latin note.

Line 183. "Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage." "The poet here alludes to four great causes of the ravages among ancient writings, viz. : the destruction of the Alexandrian and Palatine libraries by fire; the fiercer rage of Zoilus and Mævius and their followers against wit; the irruption of the barbarians into the empire; and the long reign of ignorance and superstition in the cloisters."—Warburton.

## Part II.

Line 206. "In large recruits," *i. e.*, in abundant supply.

Line 216. "Pierian spring." Pieria was a legendary region in the northern part of Thessaly. Here legend says Orpheus and the Muses were born.

Line 218. "And drinking largely sobers us again." Compare Bacon's Essay XVI, "Atheism": "A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

Line 248. "The world's just wonder." Supposed to be the Pantheon or St. Peter's at Rome.

Line 266. "Once on a time, La Mancha's knight," etc. Taken from a spurious (second) part of *Don Quixote*; translated and remodelled by Le Sage.

Line 270. "Dennis." John Dennis, literary critic; incurred Pope's enmity and held up to scathing ridicule in the *Dunciad*.

Line 308. "Take upon content," *i. e.*, upon trust, common in Pope's time.

Line 328. "Unlucky, as Fungoso." See Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor*.

Line 361. "Denham." Sir John Denham (1615-1668). "Waller." Edmund Waller (1605-1687). Both English poets.

Line 372. "When swift Camilla scours the plain." Virgin warrior, queen of the Volscians. Vergil's *Æneid*.

Line 374. "Timotheus' varied lays surprise." See "Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music," ode by Dryden.

Line 383. Dryden was Pope's literary model, and the latter often said that Dryden had done much for the improvement of the art of versification. He ardently admired Dryden. The only time he saw him was at Wills' Coffee-house in 1699, when he was a boy of twelve years, and the great poet aged and infirm. Dryden died the year after.

Line 391. "For fools admire." "It need hardly be pointed out that the *nil admirari* desiderated by Horace includes moral self-restraint as well as intellectual equanimity."—Ward.

Line 420. "Let a lord once own the happy lines." "You ought not to write verses," said George II., who had little taste, to Lord Hervey, "'tis beneath your rank. Leave such work to little Mr. Pope: it is his trade."—Warton.

Line 441. "Who knew most sentences." Peter Lombard, an Italian theologian, called "Master of the Sentences," from a work he compiled, *Book of Sentences*, selections from the theological writings of the Church Fathers.

Line 444. The "Scotists" were the disciples of Duns Scotus (1265-1308), scholastic. The "Thomists" were disciples of Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274), theologian. These men were founders of rival sects.

Line 445. "Duck-lane." A place near Smithfield, London, where old and second-hand books were sold.

Line 459. "Parsons, critics." The parson referred to was

Jeremy Collier, a clergyman of the Church of England, who vigorously attacked the coarseness of the stage. "Critics,"—allusion to the Duke of Buckingham, who ridiculed Dryden's occasional inflated style in his plays.

Line 463. Sir Richard Blackmore (1650–1729), English physician, poet, and prose writer. Satirizes Dryden. Luke Milbourn, a clergyman, "the fairest of critics"—Pope.

Line 465. "Zoilus," a Greek rhetorician, and severe critic of Homer.

Line 482. "Our sons their fathers' failing language see." An English critic has said that in fifty years the works of Charles Dickens will not be understood.

Line 536. "An easy monarch's care." Charles II.

Line 538. "Statesmen farces writ." Refers to the Duke of Buckingham, who wrote *The Rehearsal*.

Line 541. "Not a mask." Allusion to the custom of women wearing masks at the play.

Line 544. "A foreign reign." Of William III.

Line 545. "The author has omitted two lines which stood here, as containing a national reflection, which in his stricter judgment he could not but disapprove on any people whatever."—Pope. The cancelled couplet was :

"Then first the Belgian morals were extolled,  
We their religion had, and they our gold."

Line 546. "Priests reformed the nation." The Latitudinarian divines of the Low Church party.

### Part III.

Lines 585, 586. "This picture was taken to himself by John Dennis, a furious old critic by profession, who, upon no other provocation, wrote against this essay and its author, in a manner perfectly lunatic; for, as to the mention made of him in ver. 270, he took it as a compliment, and said it was treacherously meant to cause him to overlook this abuse of his person."—Pope.

Line 591. "Degrees." Referring to the privilege granted to noblemen and their sons, to take the degree of M.A. after remaining at the University two years.

Line 617. "Durfey" (1650–1723). An English dramatist and humorous poet of inferior merit.

Line 619. Garth. "A common slander at that time in prejudice of that deserving author."—Pope.

Line 623. "Paul's church," etc. "Before the fire of London, St. Paul's churchyard was the headquarters of the booksellers, who have never wholly deserted it."—Ward.

Line 625. "For fools rush in," etc. See Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Act I, Sc. 3.

Line 648. "The Mæonian star." Mæonia, the ancient name of Lydia, Asia Minor.

Line 651. "Stood convinced 't was fit." Aristotle wrote *Natural History* and *Poetics*.

Line 665. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *circa* 30 B.C., Greek rhetorician and historian.

Line 667. Petronius Arbiter, of the time of Nero, died 66 A.D., reputed author of the *Satiricon*.

Line 669. Quintilian (35–95 A.D.), one of the most distinguished of Roman rhetoricians and critics. His *Institutions of Oratory* was admiringly studied by Pope.

Line 675. Longinus (210–273 A.D.), noted Greek philosopher; author of *Treatise on the Sublime*.

Line 693. Erasmus (1465–1536). Famous classical and theological scholar. He revived the learning of the Greeks in the 16th century. Was an ecclesiastical writer of note and a controversialist.

Line 697. "Leo's golden days." The learned Leo X, Pope 1513–1521. A liberal patron of literature and art.

Line 704. "A Vida sung." Vida, born at Cremona, in 1480, celebrated Italian critic and poet. Chief poem, *Art of Poetry*.

Line 709. "By impious arms from Latium chased." Allusion to the sack of Rome by the Duke of Bourbon in 1527.

Line 714. Boileau, famous French critic (1636–1711). His *Art of Poetry*, his masterpiece.

Line 723. "Such was the muse, whose rules and practice tell." Reference to the great work of the Duke of Buckingham, *Essay on Poetry*.

Line 725. Lord Roscommon (1635–1684). The learned author of *Essay on Translated Verse*. Intimate friend of Dryden.

Line 729. William Walsh (1663–1709), a writer of ordinary merit, unduly praised by Pope, whose friendship for service rendered warped his judgment of the poet's powers. Of Walsh, Dr. Johnson says, "he is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by anything done or written by himself."





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